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ABSTRACT

This manual provides training information for implementing supported employment by using a customer-driven approach. Chapter 1, "Supported Employment: A Customer-Driven Approach" (Valerie Brooke and others), describes current best practices, a new customer-driven approach to supported employment, and the role of the employment specialist. Chapter 2, "Organizational Marketing" (Amy Armstrong and others), discusses developing and implementing a marketing strategy for supported employment programs. The following chapter, "Customer Profile" (Wendy Parent and others), describes the process of developing a customer profile to assist individuals in finding a job. Chapter 4, "Job Development: The Path to Careers" (Karen Flippo and others), discusses techniques for increasing customer involvement in job development, developing business partnerships, crafting the job search plan, job analysis, and accommodations. The next chapter, "Employment Selection" (J. Michael Barcus and others), describes how to assist a customer in applying for a job and job interviewing, and activities that need to be coordinated prior to a customer's first day of work. Chapter 6, "Job Site Training" (Katherine Inge), discusses job duty and task analysis, natural supports and cues, instructional strategies, self-management, job site modifications, and fading from the job site. Expanding job responsibilities, monitoring and coordinating of supports, employee assistance programs, and funding supports and services are covered in chapter 7, "Long Term Supports" (Valerie Brooke and others). The final chapter, "Quality Supported Employment Services" (Howard Green and others), addresses the importance of assessing the quality of supported employment programs and the purpose of quality indicators. Each chapter includes case studies, related blank forms, and specific references. (CR)

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
on Supported Employment
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Supported Employment Handbook:

A Customer-Driven Approach for Persons with Significant Disabilities

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February, 1997

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
on Supported Employment
Virginia Commonwealth University

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We are grateful to the assistance provided by our employment specialists and the customers whom they serve. Together, they practice the techniques and strategies that are presented here. In addition, we are extremely grateful to our friend and colleague Ed Turner who has assisted us in shaping our concept of customer. Finally, we are appreciative of Jeanne Roberts for her tolerance of our need to change, "just one more thing."

Preface

WE now know, for example, that there are regular illustrations of competitive employment on the part of persons who heretofore were institutionalized in nursing homes, adult activity centers, or state facilities in most communities throughout America. There are persons who once banged their heads 30 times a minute working successfully in hotels with appropriate co-worker and employment specialist support. We can visit persons with severe physical and communication challenges at their jobs as computer programmers in university settings. We are able to finally give real hope to parents of children born with severe autism, dual sensory impairments or Down Syndrome and say: "Yes, competitive employment can be a reality." This is an enormous accomplishment. It should not be taken lightly nor overlooked, since it provides a gold standard or beacon for people with significant disabilities and their families to aim toward.

Despite the marvelous gains and progress made in the venue of work, we still have barely scratched the surface. Too many people have been left behind who want to work but need support. There are people who want to have a life, a real life, but have been captured into dead end environments that do not offer growth. As yet, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has not helped these individuals nor has supported employment technology. They have been left behind.

Furthermore, the quality of supported employment programs is uneven and disparate from community to community and state to state. The lack, of quality in supported employment programs casts a shadow on the power of this approach. When any good idea is not implemented correctly, it usually will not lead to the desired results. Supported employment is no different.

Therefore, the purpose of this manual is to provide a contemporary training resource on implementing supported employment using a ***customer-driven approach***. This is a model that works when the customer directs the process. We must be prepared to support the customers of supported employment to obtain the careers of their choice. With this challenge in hand I hope you find this manual helpful as you provide customer-driven services.

Paul Wehman

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Supported Employment: A Customer-Driven Approach

A relatively short time ago, there was a pervasive perception that individuals with significant disabilities were incapable of competitive employment. The predominant philosophy during this period suggested that individuals with significant disabilities needed to be "fixed", "cured", "prevocationally trained", or "habilitated" before they could have a legitimate work life. Over the past 15 years, this perception has been drastically altered. Supported employment has played a major role in changing these perceptions.

One of the greatest strengths of supported employment is the sheer simplicity of its concept: to assist persons with severe or significant disabilities in obtaining and maintaining community integrated competitive employment through specifically planned supports. The philosophy completely turns the old service delivery paradigm aside and puts the focus on the consumer or **customer** of the service. Yet, the field has been fraught with confusion, even from the very early years of supported employment. Evidence of this confusion can be found in the original Job Coach Training Manual published by VCU-RRTC in the early 1980's. The glossary of terms defined the similarities and differences between the supported work model of competitive employment, supported competitive employment, job coach model, individual placement model, supported jobs, competitive employment, bench work model, mobile work crews, and transitional employment. Many national supported employment experts have attributed the loss of focus and intensity in supported employment implementation efforts to the confusion about the basic premise of supported employment and a lack of understanding of best practices and technology. This chapter will attempt to remedy this issue by sharing historical information, current best practices, as well as a new customer-driven approach to supported employment.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In the middle of the 20th century, most adults with significant disabilities were viewed as unemployable, and/or unable to compete in the nation's competitive labor force. Typically, most individuals lived with their families or in large segregated institutions. For the most part, people with disabilities were not seen as contributing members of society; rather, they were viewed as wards of the state who needed care and protection.

The 1960's brought a decade of change that focused on the civil rights of all American citizens. Although the Civil Rights Act did not focus specifically on persons with disabilities, it did become a piece of cornerstone legislation, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race and national origin. In addition, deinstitutionalization was beginning to occur for persons with disabilities. Primarily, this was for individuals residing in mental health centers.

The 1970's were an important decade for people with disabilities. Several significant events occurred during this period that altered society's image of people with disabilities. Primary among these events was the beginning of a strong and organized disability movement. The table on this page provides a brief chronology of key events that would play a major role in shaping the future philosophical framework for supported employment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT VALUES

Supported employment demonstration projects emerged during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Generally, these demonstration projects were small and typically were tied to university-based programs.

Prior to the availability of supported employment as a service option, the values inherent in traditional sheltered employment programs, sometimes referred to as affirmative industry, can be traced back to a time when community-oriented services for people with disabilities did not exist and a facility-based solution seemed to fit the need. Facility-based programs offered families security, consistency, and safety.

KEY EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

1972: Principle of Normalization

Wolf Wolfensburg calls for a new service delivery paradigm which moves services for people with disabilities away from segregated programs into the mainstream of society. The principle of normalization became imbedded in federal law and community services for people with disabilities became increasingly available.

1972: Try Another Way

Marc Gold and Associates develops a new vocational training technology which demonstrates that people with significant cognitive disabilities can learn complex vocational tasks.

1973: Centers for Independent Living

For the first time, the government recognizes independent living as a viable concept and Centers for Independent Living are funded and opened around the country.

1975: Public Law 94-142

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act mandates a free and appropriate public education for all children in the least restrictive environment.

1. **Security**: The facility-based program assured people with disabilities and their family members that they would have an adult day program/service as an alternative to staying at home.
2. **Consistency**: The facility offered a program that was built around a routine.
3. **Safety:** The facility provided for a safe and well-supervised environment.

The advent of supported employment led many people with disabilities, family members, service providers, and other citizens to examine their values and approach to rehabilitation.

Over time, people with disabilities, families, advocates, and professionals began to criticize and openly disapprove of sheltered employment facilities. This general dissatisfaction occurred as a natural evolution of the philosophical mind-shift that emerged during the 1970's and 1980's. With the national publication of successful supported employment demonstration projects, there emerged a new rehabilitation model. Employment was seen, by many, as the means by which people with disabilities could obtain community membership.

From its inception, in the early 1980's supported employment services have required rehabilitation service providers, employers, families, and legislatures to examine their values regarding an individual's right to work. These discussions included such issues as severity and type of disability, type of employment, number of hours worked, benefits, earnings, and environmental setting. Supported employment has always been about real community jobs for all people, specifically those individuals with significant disabilities. This means physical and social participation of supported employment participants in the business setting with equal pay for equal work; in fact, the higher the earnings the better.

By the end of the 1980's, many historical events had occurred that led to the establishment of supported employment as a viable rehabilitation service option.

- **The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services funded a number of states to create supported employment systems change.**
- **The Rehabilitation Act was amended in 1986 to include: 1) definition of supported employment; 2) provisions for exclusive funds for supported employment (Title VI-C); and 3) authorization of case service dollars for individuals traditionally served by vocational rehabilitation (Title I).**
- **New interagency collaborations at both the state and local levels of government were established to achieve supported employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities.**
- **The concepts of "employability" and "readiness" gained national attention as out-of-date concepts.**
- **Supported employment was established as an alternative service option with a presumption of employment for all individuals, in a competitive job that is related to the person's interests and abilities.**

The 1980's ended with a new array of vocational services for persons with significant disabilities. Essentially, the old practices of the 1970's continued while the new rehabilitation model called supported employment was added onto the traditional rehabilitation services options. People with severe disabilities could now choose from a variety of vocational alternatives. These alternatives ranged from day treatment services which are facility-based and generally non-vocational in design; to supported employment, which includes real jobs in the local labor market with assistance and support in obtaining and maintaining community integrated competitive employment. The following table lists nine values that have guided supported employment efforts from the early 1980's and provides a brief description of each.

Supported Employment Values

Values	Values Clarification
Presumption of Employment	A conviction that everyone, regardless of the level or the type of disability, has the capability and right to a job.
Competitive Employment	A conviction that employment occurs within the local labor market in regular community businesses.
Control	A conviction that when people with disabilities choose and regulate their own employment supports and services, career satisfaction will result.
Commensurate Wages & Benefits	A conviction that people with disabilities should earn wages and benefits equal to that of coworkers performing the same or similar jobs.
Focus on Capacity & Capabilities	A conviction that people with disabilities should be viewed in terms of their abilities, strengths, and interests rather than their disabilities.
Importance of Relationships	A conviction that community relationships both at, and away from, work leads to mutual respect and acceptance.
Power of Supports	A conviction that people with disabilities need to determine their personal goals and receive assistance in assembling the supports necessary to achieve their ambitions.
Systems Change	A conviction that traditional systems must be changed to ensure customer control which is vital to the integrity of supported employment.
Importance of Community	A conviction that people need to be connected to the formal and informal networks of a community for acceptance, growth, and development.

From its inception, supported employment has been characterized by individual placement or group option arrangements. Initially, four distinct models for supported employment implementation were introduced and defined. It was thought by many professionals that many new models would evolve over time. However, over the last several years the models of supported employment have remained largely intact with the exception of an additional group option that was introduced in the early 1990's.

Individual Option

Individual Placement Model of Competitive Employment -- This model is considered by many to be the least restrictive and most normalizing of all the rehabilitation service delivery models (Rehab Brief, 1986). This model is characterized by one employment specialist working with one person to obtain and maintain the community integrated competitive employment position of choice (Moon, Goodall, Barcus & Brooke, 1985; Wehman, 1981).

Group Options

Enclave -- An enclave can be defined as a group of individuals, usually three to eight, who work together in a group with the assistance of a permanent full-time supervisor. Employment occurs within a regular, community-based industry called the host company with participants' earnings based upon production rate results. (Rhodes & Valenta, 1985a).

Mobile Work Crew -- A mobile work crew usually includes between three to eight employees with significant disabilities and one or two supervisors. Typically, a mobile work crew travels through a community performing specialized contract services. This model is different from enclaves, because mobile crews typically operate several different contracts and move regularly from one business to another. Crew supervisors are often responsible for providing daily supervision and coaching of crew employees, while performing on-going contract procurement activities. For this reason, a mobile work crew can be a complex business to operate (Jacobs,1974; Bourbeau, 1985).

Dispersed Group or Cluster Option -- The dispersed group or cluster option of supported employment is similar to the other group options, in that the agency provides a full-time supervisor to provide training to the employees. Yet, the cluster option has several significant differences to include: 1) all supported employment participants are hired by the business, and 2) wage earnings are commensurate with co-workers performing the same/similar duties. This model of supported employment is characterized by the business hiring up to eight individuals, all of whom work in different positions but in close proximity to the on-site supervisor (Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990; Nietupski, 1993).

Entrepreneurial Model -- The entrepreneurial or small business option of supported employment has changed a great deal in the last few years. For many years, this model was characterized by manufacturing services design or subcontract operation arrangements, that hired eight or fewer persons with significant disabilities, as well as employees without disabilities. The most notable of the early entrepreneurial model programs was the benchwork model which involved a benchwork of small electronic assembly businesses across the country (Boles, Bellamy, Horner, & Mank, 1985; O'Brian, 1985).

In the past, the entrepreneurial model was operated with the "system" in control of the business or sub-contract arrangement. Today the entrepreneurial model of supported employment looks very different. People with significant disabilities are joining their friends and families and are owning and operating their own businesses. The success of these small businesses will depend on the ability to attract customers or, in some cases, contracts.

It is important to note that in the last several years supported employment has seen a sharp decline in the number of persons participating in group options and a growth in individual placement models. This manual will address the development and implementation of the individual placement model of competitive employment. However, best practices, strategies, and outcomes that will be presented will apply to all supported employment options.

Over the years, supported employment has continued to grow and progress. This progress has resulted in a new way of doing business. This vision of supported employment is characterized by a **"customer-driven approach"** to supported employment. This approach includes several critical best practices which are described in the following section.

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN APPROACH TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Many individuals with disabilities have characterized their typical relationships with human service and/or rehabilitation professionals as paternalistic or as a "professionals know best" attitude. This general air of condescension toward individuals with disabilities has many negative and far reaching implications which ultimately affect the ability for them to direct their own lives and become fully integrated into their communities. When professionals view persons with disabilities as "helpless," employers, family members, and the general public accept this same attitude. The result is the continuation of negative attitudes and stereotypical images of persons with disabilities throughout the general public. This same paternalistic attitude exists in the field of supported employment. Many rehabilitation counselors, case managers, job coaches, and program managers have been delivering supported employment services and engaging in practices that directly or indirectly transmit a message to persons with disabilities that "we, the professionals, are in charge."

Nationally, such complaints as "he just doesn't appreciate the job that I got him" or "if only I didn't have to deal with her family" are common statements made by professionals. All too often, these professionals are making decisions for consumers. Professionals who engage in this type of behavior are imposing their values or the agency's values on the people receiving services. When this occurs, the rights of people with disabilities are violated. Fortunately, this method of "doing business" is coming to an end. People with disabilities are speaking out, taking control of their lives, and seeking to direct the services they need. This current movement of people with disabilities asserting choice and control over their destinies is having a major impact on supported employment services and has led to a **"customer-driven approach"** to supported employment.

BEST PRACTICES

There are nine best practices that are encompassed in this approach to supported employment. Central to the concept is the idea that the customer is in control of the process. The role of the employment specialist is to assist the customer in reaching his or her career goals. The best practices form the foundation for the customer-driven approach to supported employment. High quality supported employment service providers will incorporate these practices into their daily activities of implementing supported employment services.

BEST PRACTICES IN A CUSTOMER-DRIVEN APPROACH TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

1. **Choice**
2. **Control**
3. **Careers**
4. **Full Inclusion**
5. **Long term Supports**
6. **Community & Business Supports**
7. **Total Quality Management**
8. **Assistive Technology**
9. **Person-Centered Planning**

Choice. The opportunity to make choices concerning employment, living arrangements, and recreation has been limited or nonexistent for many individuals with disabilities. It has become increasingly evident that the powerlessness and lack of direction frequently felt by people with disabilities are related to the attitudes and practices of service providers, care givers, funding agencies, and society in general rather than any true limitation as a result of an individual's disability. For example, some individuals have never had an opportunity to make choices. Decision-making skills have not been taught or encouraged, or adequate information about alternatives has not been available. Many people with disabilities have voiced their concerns that all too frequently decisions are made by professionals who feel that they know best and that self-assertion is often ignored, underestimated, or seen as a "challenging behavior."

Customer choice frequently has been restricted by other external forces such as agency regulations, lack of accessible information, inadequate supports, or stereotypical attitudes. For example, an individual may be forced to choose between attending the sheltered workshop or a job that he or she does not like, because the agency requires that all residents who live in the group home have eight hours of day activity.

Choice in a customer-driven model of supported employment would dictate that all supported employment customers are presented with a variety of experiences, options, and supports to achieve career goals of their choice. If individuals are to experience personal satisfaction and quality of life, regardless of the level or type of disability, they must be given the opportunity and support to express preferences. Supported employment customers need to be directing the process by choosing the service provider, the subsequent employment specialist, and the specific support services that they may need to obtain and maintain employment. State vocational rehabilitation programs can assist customers with this process by sharing supported employment agency summary data for the identification and selection of a service provider.

Control. The concept of control expands the above definition of choice to a broader concept of exerting control and ultimately self-determination. Customers of supported employment must be in a position to not only choose their service provider and employment specialist but to have a measure of control over the services that they seek. Federal legislation has begun to recognize the importance of this concept and the rights of persons with disabilities to have control over their lives.

Control, as a concept in a customer-driven approach, is used to refer to an individual's ability to access supported employment services and to freely act upon his or her choices and decisions without fear of reprisal. Supported employment customers must be free to participate in supported employment services by choosing a service provider or employment specialist, by accepting or declining a specific job, or by electing to resign or continue employment with a particular company.

Careers. Career development is an important consideration for any adult seeking employment. However, many supported employment service providers gauge success by the length of time an individual remains in the same employment position. In addition, service providers often put too much emphasis on the number of placements that they make rather than on customer satisfaction with an employment situation. These practices continue to occur for a number of reasons including inaccurate interpretation of federal and/or state rehabilitation policies that results in failure to use funds for job advancement; and limited employment expectations for people with disabilities among service providers, which directs customers into dead-end positions.

The customer-driven approach to supported employment places an increased emphasis on the initial time that a direct service provider spends with the customer to assist with the identification of career goals. High quality service providers must be skilled in working closely with their customers to develop strategies for marketing their service, establishing a rapport with the business community, interviewing employers, and conducting in-depth job analysis of specific employment settings. Completing this process will yield an extensive amount of information for the customer to determine if the wages, benefits, conditions, supports, and corporate culture are sufficient for long term career development.

Full Community Inclusion. The concept of full community inclusion calls for a vision of society in which all persons are viewed in terms of their abilities and are welcomed into the mainstream of community life. The whole notion of community inclusion stresses relationships both formal and informal, as well as, business and social. Yet, a segment of the general public has the impression that people with disabilities are better served when they are with other people with similar disabilities. This faulty notion persists, in part, due to the creation of "special" services for people with disabilities and by not adequately representing or connecting people with disabilities to the formal and informal social structures.

In a customer-driven approach, the customers of supported employment services work with service providers in the marketing of the employment service. Developing a marketing approach and materials with the customers of the service will help to ensure that people with disabilities are represented in a positive manner to the business community. In addition, the employment specialist needs to actively assist customers in developing networks that are based on his or her desires, wants and, needs. Too often, employment specialists have personally provided critical employment supports rather than taking additional time to find a family, friend, or community source for the same support.

Relationship building at the business site will be vital to building full community inclusion and achieving employment satisfaction. For example, working age adults spend, on average, 40 hours a week at their place of employment. The office or business setting is where many social relationships are formed. This same principle holds true for people with disabilities. However, because some people are still uncertain of how to approach someone with a disability, the employment specialist can assist by breaking down these artificial barriers from the first day of work. Assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain full inclusion in the work setting will facilitate a new vision of community where all members are valued.

Long Term Supports. Supported employment provides for the necessary supports to assist an individual with long term employment retention. By federal definition, supported employment includes at least two monthly contacts at the job site unless the customer requests otherwise. The long term support component is an extremely unique feature among rehabilitation services. Unlike other services, the entire notion of service termination is never addressed. The intention be-hind this feature of supported employment is the realization that individuals, as well as businesses, are fluid. Individuals do not simply get a job in a local business and then stay there for the rest of their lives. While the likelihood of remaining in the same occupation has remained constant, staying with the same employer or even in the same industry has declined significantly over the last ten years (National Alliance of Business, 1996).

Despite the importance of long term supports, it is the area of supported employment that has received the least amount of attention. Generally, service providers are very concerned with options for funding of this component of supported employment. Yet, the entire notion of type and level of support has been left open for individual interpretation.

In a customer-driven approach, the long term supports should be designed to assist the customer in the identification and provision of supports and extended services which maintain and enhance the person's position as a valued member of the work force. It is vital to note that many of the issues and concerns that are presented in the long term support stage began prior to employment or during the initial weeks of employment. There is a strong connection between the employment match process and long term employment success. Retention and employment satisfaction must be planned for from the beginning. Customers actively participating in all employment decisions, from the beginning including type and level of supports and interventions, will help to ensure satisfaction. Employment specialists must move away from the notion of stabilization and focus on long term success. Co-worker support, assistive technology, wages, co-worker relationships, friendships, changes in work routine, and employee and employer satisfaction are the key issues that must be addressed in an extended services plan. Supported employment customers, employers, and direct service providers need to determine individualized strategies for providing support that will assist in career advancement and, ultimately, facilitate long term job satisfaction for the customer and the employer.

Community & Business Supports. As stated earlier, the whole notion of support has been vital to the national expansion of supported employment. The individualized nature of supported employment in the delivery of needed assistance in conjunction with an employment specialist is the major reason why supported employment is widely accepted and promoted by people with disabilities. As the customer-driven approach evolves, the employment specialist must develop the necessary skills to ensure that the customers of the service are directing the process.

Natural supports as originally introduced includes supports to be provided by individuals, such as co-workers and employers, who are not hired by a human services organization. In a customer-driven approach, these supports include a full range of supports that can be found both at the employee's place of business and in the community. They are designed to assist an individual with employment and community participation. An employment specialist must be prepared and have the necessary knowledge to develop community and business supports, facilitate informed choice, assist in assessing preferred choice, provide a variety of individualized supports, coordinate and monitor all types of assistance and respond to changes over time. The direct service providers of supported employment should be spending less time actually engaged in delivering a support and more time engaged in assessing a situation with a customer, sharing information about possible support options, assisting the customer in accessing the support option, and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy.

Continuous Quality Improvement. The concept of continuous quality improvement is known by many different terms and variations to include: Total Quality Control, Total Quality Improvement, Total Quality, and Managing for Quality. There are

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striking similarities between these terms that generally refer to an approach that can be used by a service delivery provider to constantly reevaluate quality. Continuous quality improvement calls for service providers to focus their time and energy on improving the process, the product, and the service. The key to continuous improvement is driven and defined by the customer.

In a customer-driven approach to supported employment services, providers must listen to the wishes and desires of persons with significant disabilities to determine the agency's mission, goals and objectives. People with disabilities who are participating in supported employment or who are actively seeking services should be assisting in developing and evaluating services. In addition, employment specialists should play an active role in assisting the agency with continuous quality improvement. Having job coaches, job developers, and customers working together will give the agency the necessary data to drive the quality improvement.

Assistive Technology. Since the early 1970's, assistive technology or rehabilitation technology has emerged and opened unlimited employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Individuals who at one time faced enormous barriers concerning accessibility, communication, and mobility can now optimize their intellectual and physical capabilities. With the use of voice synthesizers, people are able to express their wants and desires. Computers can be operated by a human voice or a simple gaze of an eye. This new technology is unlocking doors and providing opportunities for a greater number of people to obtain and maintain employment.

Person-Centered Planning. Supported employment has always been about assisting one person at a time in achieving employment satisfaction. Yet, over time, some people continue to be excluded from supported employment. Person-centered planning seeks to support the contributions of each person in his or her local community by building a support group around the individual. This support group or community network functions together to assist the focus person in obtaining his or her goals and aspirations. Group members commit to regular get-togethers designed to solve problems, develop strategies, and make commitments to act on behalf of the focus person with a disability.

In a customer-driven approach to supported employment, person-centered planning provides an excellent tool for the customer to direct the career process. Family, friends, and paid care givers meet together to assist the individual in obtaining and maintaining community integrated competitive employment. The support group continues to meet even after a job is found to assist the individual in maintaining career satisfaction and other goals for full community inclusion.

CUSTOMER, NOT CONSUMER

The most significant change is how people with disabilities perceive themselves, and what they want from their relationships with professionals. The "customer's" concept represents a change in thinking and is part of the evolutionary process occurring nationally. Today, people with disabilities seeking community integrated competitive employment are referring to themselves as customers. They are still saying that they want and need the assistance of a professional to obtain and maintain competitive employment. However, what they are demanding is for supported employment services to be developed, marketed, and delivered based upon what would best fit the customer's needs, rather than what is convenient to the existing service system.

SERVICE PROVIDER

In the 1980's, service providers never discussed how people with disabilities could select a supported employment program. Today, most communities have multiple supported employment service providers. Customers must interview each program to determine which organization receives their business. Some of the best examples of this practice can be found in communities that are using a voucher system to pay for supported employment services. Rehabilitation customers with vouchers are exercising their rights to purchase supported employment services from friends, human service organizations, or community employment agencies.

One of the key factors related to employment retention is the rapport that is established between the direct service provider and the new employee. Therefore, once a customer has selected the supported employment service provider, he or she should interview the direct service staff of the organization to determine which individual would be best suited to deliver his or her service needs. The following table presents a series of questions that customers can use when preparing to interview supported employment service providers and to make a subsequent decision regarding employment supports.

CUSTOMER'S SELECTING A SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER

Before the Interview

- Call and schedule an appointment.
- Make a list of interview questions.
- Identify priority questions.
- Invite a support person or note taker to accompany you to the interview.

After the Interview

- Organize information following the interview and compare results.
- Decide which provider will best meet your needs.
- Call the provider and let them know why you selected their service.
- Write a note to the programs that you didn't select and let them know why they lost your business.

CUSTOMER'S SELECTING A SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER

Interview Questions

- Does your program have a written vision?
- What types of services does your agency offer?
- Do you have experience serving customers with different types of disabilities?
- How would you describe the role of the customer in supported employment?
- Have you excluded people with disabilities from your program? If so why?
- Describe how you present your program to a prospective employer?
- May I see a copy of your marketing materials?
- How many employment specialists does your agency employ?
- What is the average length of employment for your employment specialists?
- Do the majority of your customers have part-time or full-time employment?
- What is the average weekly earnings of your customers?
- What types of jobs have you assisted customers in finding?
- Does your program assist customers with Social Security issues?
- Do customers choose their employment specialists?
- How do you fund extended services?
- How do you assess customer satisfaction? Do you have any data?
- Do you have any program references from customers, employers, and family members?

Brooke, Wehman, Inge & Parent, 1995

ROLE OF THE EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST

The most exciting feature that is consistent throughout the customer-driven approach to supported employment is the clear shift of control from the service provider to the customer. Historically, this individual has had many titles such as: trainer advocate, job trainer, job coach, supported employment training specialist, and employment specialist. For purposes of this manual, the direct service position in supported employment will be referred to as the employment specialist or job coach.

Within a customer-driven approach to supported employment, the employment specialist's job functions are linked to major components of the support service to include the following: 1) customer profile; 2) career development; 3) employment match; 4) job-site training and supports and; 5) long-term supports/extended services. However, the specific activities that the employment specialist actually performs within these categories will vary depending upon the needs of the individual requesting services. To adequately perform each of these functions, the employment specialist must move comfortably in and out of a variety of roles. There are five distinct roles that supported employment direct service personnel perform within each of the functions associated with a customer-driven approach to supported employment.

The five roles described in this section are not weighted, and therefore share the same level of importance. A good employment specialist would not, for example, focus solely on the "consultant role" or the "planner role" to the exclusion of the other areas. Rather, a well-trained employment specialist must be prepared to serve in many different capacities to effectively meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities who seek supported employment services. It is important to remember that the employment specialist must work closely with the customer, employer, co-workers, family, and others, providing as little or as much assistance as the individual needs to accomplish her or his identified goals. The following section will review the activities associated with each of these distinct roles.

Planner Role

An employment specialist acting in the planner role would analyze the services that a supported employment customer was seeking and then assist him or her in the development of a plan to achieve the identified goals. The planner role involves the development of a customer profile in which desirable career options and community supports are identified. Mapping out activities, identifying potential supports, scheduling meetings with organizations, and identifying resources to be utilized would be important functions of the planner role. Setting up and conducting a situational assessment is one example of a desirable activity for the planner. This service would be provided to those customers who were seeking clarity in choosing a career path, distinguishing interests, or identifying critical support needs.

Consultant Role

An employment specialist must be prepared to enter into a consultant relationship with customers of supported employment services. As with any consultant relationship, the expectations related to this role would be to provide recommendations based upon the consultant's knowledge and expertise. The supported employment customer would be free to then accept or reject the consultant's advice and to contract for additional services as needed. A specific example of the consultant role would be to provide recommendations to the customer in regards to employment selection, job site organization, use of compensatory strategies, technology, and potential support that would assist in getting and keeping a job.

Head Hunter Role

The head hunter role represents an important area of job responsibilities for the employment specialist. Acting in this role, the employment specialist engages in a variety of marketing activities ranging from the development and dissemination of promotional information about supported employment services to the identification of strategies for an individual to market him or herself to a prospective employer. A "high power" head hunter would remain current with community labor market and local economic development opportunities and include such job responsibilities as tracking data on primary and secondary labor markets within a community, conducting labor market surveys, participating in business advisory boards, keeping files on community employers, and making cold calls to businesses with the intent of seeking position openings or potential need to hire. Essentially, the head hunter spends time developing strong relationships with the entire employment community.

Technician Role

An employment specialist will be required to perform in the role of a technician, requiring many technical skills and abilities. She or he must be well versed in the latest high and low rehabilitation technologies that would assist an individual to enter the world of work, to maintain a current employment position, or obtain a career advancement. The technician's role also requires the employment specialist to be able to identify appropriate strategies to teach needed skills, provide training as needs arise, and to fade assistance in a systematic process that ensures acquisition and maintenance of a skill. A typical example of the technician's role performed by an employment specialist is providing instruction to a customer on how to ride public transportation. The customer assists the technician in identifying a desirable training option and possible supports. The desired choice would then be implemented by a family member, a person riding the bus, or the employment specialist. It is the technician's responsibility to set up the training procedure and ensure that it is implemented as the customer requested.

Community Resource Role

The community resource role requires the employment specialist to have a thorough knowledge of the community. This knowledge can be obtained by conducting regular community analysis activities that investigate potential support resources. These resource areas are not limited to the business community, but rather covers the entire range of community supports to include transportation, recreation, social, housing, and independent living, organizations and agencies. Acting in this community resource role, the employment specialist continually identifies information that will be used to assist an individual in determining preferences for possible supports. This role is vital in helping to ensure that customers are not only achieving a measure of economic success but also social success.

IMPLEMENTING THE CUSTOMER-DRIVEN APPROACH

As discussed earlier in this chapter, techniques for implementing a customer-driven approach to supported employment require the individual with the significant disability to direct the process. Decisions from selecting the community service provider and job coach to identifying the type and level of long-term supports must be made by the supported employment customer. The following section provides a brief description of the major components of a customer-driven approach to supported employment with techniques for implementation.

Organizational Marketing and Job Development

In the past, when supported employment programs conducted organizational marketing it was done in isolation of people with disabilities. With a customer-driven approach the individual with a significant disability and his or her family members become active participants in the process. While organizational marketing has very different goals and objectives than career development, good marketing techniques naturally blend into the job development phase of supported employment.

Career development is an important consideration for any adult seeking employment. However, many supported employment service providers gage success by the length of time an individual remains in the same employment position. In addition, service providers often put too much emphasis on the number of placements made rather than on customer satisfaction with an employment situation. While these practices continue to occur for a number of reasons, service delivery can improve through increased knowledge of federal and/or state regulations and increased employment expectations for people with disabilities.

The customer-driven approach to supported employment places new emphasis on relationship building with customers and employers for careers. High quality service providers must be skilled in working closely with customers and together develop strategies for marketing their service, establishing a rapport with the business community, interviewing employers, and conducting in-depth job analysis of specific employment settings. Completing this process will allow the service provider to gather an extensive amount of information for the customer to determine if the wages, benefits, conditions, supports, and corporate culture are sufficient for long term career development. The following table presents a list of customer-driven practices associated with organizational marketing and job development.

ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING AND JOB DEVELOPMENT: THE PATH TO CAREERS

- Customer works with the organization and moves about the business community using competitive, business oriented language.
- Customer and employment specialist develop marketing materials.
- Customer manages the job search with support from the employment specialist.
- Customer conducts informational interviewing with business community.
- Customer and employment specialist develop employment resume for specific job searches.
- Customer is aware of how service provider represents him/her and ADA to the business community

Customer Profile

The intent of supported employment has always been to provide a vocational alternative for individuals who were screened out of traditional rehabilitation models. Yet, over the years, supported employment service providers continued to use information gained during assessment to determine whether an individual was "ready" for competitive employment. The customer-driven approach moves away from the term assessment and resulting concepts that exclude individuals from employment.

Instead, service providers need to obtain a "snapshot" or profile of the customer and what he or she wants to achieve through supported employment. A person's age and past experiences will provide a guide to obtain the information necessary to gather during this process. In all cases, it is critical for the service provider to spend time with the customer and his or her family members to determine personal strengths, concerns, desires, and anticipated employment outcomes. Short situational assessments in real work environments, person-centered planning, and the identification of possible community and business supports will assist supported employment service providers in assuring high quality outcomes and customer satisfaction. The following table will provide techniques for a customer-driven approach to customer profile.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

- Customer is assisted in developing an employment vision.
- Customer and family members spend time getting to know service provider.
- Customer is assisted in identifying significant people who are interested in employment outcome.
- Customer is encouraged to share wants, likes, and needs.
- Customer participates in situational assessment.
- Customer is assisted in developing potential list of support needs.

Employment Selection

Compiling and analyzing the information gathered during the customer profile phase with the information collected on the business is the only way to ensure a successful employment start. Typically, months elapse between the time the service provider completes the customer profile and subsequently performs a detailed job analysis on a prospective employment position. When a job opening occurs, service providers may not carefully analyze the unique features related specifically to the business and the individual. Rushing to fill job openings causes service providers to exclude the customer in the employment match process. Customers often are not contacted by service providers until it is time for a job interview. When an individual is left out of the process, he or she will not be vested in the job that the agency locates.

Implementing a customer-driven approach calls for the service provider to be concerned with long-term employment success by assisting the customer in organizing and achieving a desirable plan for the future. Service providers must involve customers in every aspect of the employment match process. For instance, jobs often are found through family and friends. Customers of supported employment programs need to use their networks and contacts as the service provider assists with coordinating and implementing support strategies. In addition, customers are beginning to assist in the job analysis process to learn information about the business. Regardless of whether the customer, family member, friend, or direct service provider finds the job, it is critical to complete a job analysis to ensure that the employment situation matches the customer's career plans. Further, the customer-driven approach requires that the customer, not the service provider, choose the employment opportunities using the information gathered from the employment site and customer profile. Customer-driven employment selection practices are listed in the following table.

EMPLOYMENT SELECTION

- Customer is notified of all job openings as program becomes aware.
- Customer assists employment specialist in analyzing personal strengths and interests with specific employer demands and business culture.
- Customer determines if salary and benefit package are satisfactory.
- Customer determines if interested in pursuing job opening.

Job-Site Training and Support

Detailed job duty analysis, identification and use of community and workplace supports, systematic instruction, compensatory strategies, orientation training, and workplace accommodations have always been the cornerstones of well-developed job-site training and support plans. Loss of employment during this supported employment phase reflects a deficit in the instructional procedure or job match process rather than the individual's ability to work competitively. However, over the years, as individuals lost jobs, many service providers labeled these persons as, "not job ready." This notion of job readiness goes against the founding philosophy of supported employment.

If supported employment programs are going to serve persons with the most significant disabilities, direct service providers must use the existing technology and best practices described extensively in the literature. When using a customer-driven approach to supported employment, the customer is involved in all decisions regarding his or her training. Customers should assist in the development of the job duty analysis and task analysis, selection of instructional procedures, design and purchase of assistive devices, and identification and design of compensatory strategies to ensure that customers are directing their own careers. Strategies for customer-driven job-site training and support are listed below.

JOB-SITE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Customer works with the employment specialist to determine training and support needs.
- Customer selects training and support options.
- Customer works with the employment specialist to develop all plans and/or contracts.
- Customer works with the employment specialist to determine fading schedule.
- Customer is in regular contact with employer.
- Customer is in regular contact and develops relationships with co-workers from the first day of employment.

Long Term Support

Over the years, some customers of supported employment services have voiced their concerns about the follow-along visits from the employment specialist. Typically, these issues centered around the intrusive practices used by some employment specialists to monitor customer progress, which were stigmatizing in the business setting. The intended goal of long term supports is to assist the customer in the identification and provision of supports and extended services necessary to maintain and enhance the person's position as a valued member of the work force. Supported employment customers, employers, and direct service providers need to determine individualized strategies for providing support that will assist in career advancement and ultimately facilitate long term job satisfaction for the customer and the employer. The following table presents a list of customer-driven practices for long-term supports.

LONG-TERM SUPPORTS

- Customer and the employment specialist assess employment stability.
- Customer and employment specialist assess employment satisfaction.
- Customer and employment specialist address career advancement options.

(continued)

- Customer and employment specialist analyze long term support issues.
- Customer and employment specialist analyze long term funding issues and options

SUMMARY

Over the last decade, a great deal has occurred affirming supported employment as the option of choice to traditional segregated day programs. This has developed thanks to the work of thousands of individuals with disabilities and advocates from across the country. Yet, it is clear that many people with significant disabilities are still unable to access community integrated competitive employment. People with disabilities are beginning to speakout and are suggesting change in response to the current practices among supported employment service providers. This manual has been designed to assist supported employment customers, service providers, and employers as we work together to assist greater numbers of people with disabilities to obtain their careers of choice. The remaining sections of this manual will cover techniques and strategies for entering into real partnerships with customers as we work together to implement the components of supported employment and obtain employment success.

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2 Organizational Marketing

Organizational marketing and job development are critical activities which, if done well, will contribute to the supported employment participant's success on the job, as well as the success of the entire organization. An organization must approach these two distinct activities with creativity and a clear plan of action. Although organizational marketing and job development efforts are ongoing and occur concurrently, the desired outcomes of each are not necessarily the same. Therefore, these terms are not synonymous or interchangeable.

Simply put, organizational marketing "sells" the unique service or services offered by a supported employment provider. Marketing efforts are directed toward two constituents: 1) community employers; and 2) job seekers with significant disabilities. Specifically, the services that will be marketed to community employers will be the availability of a rich pool of personnel options, as well as employment centered consultation. Personnel features include dependable pre-screened applicants. Consultation activities may consist of job analysis, job restructuring, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Supported employment organizational marketing was traditionally focused upon community employers, as the primary customer. However, in a system which values choice and empowerment, and continues to debate economic control of service dollars in the hands of individuals with disabilities, supported employment organizations must begin to expand their vision of organizational marketing. Service providers now market and "sell" their services to individuals with significant disabilities as well. As discussed in the first section of this manual, the paradigm is shifting to a more tangible customer-driven approach to supported employment.

Job development, on the other hand, assists an individual to "sell" himself or herself for a specific employment position. This is done by establishing a strong business network and by developing and maintaining an information system regarding potential job openings. The primary customer during the job development process is the individual with the significant disability, also referred to as the job seeker. The job seeker is actively involved, shaping his or her own role within job development activities.

The organization must understand the important distinctions between organizational marketing and job development and appreciate the reasons why these two concepts are easily confused. The underlying foundation of each of these processes is a strong customer-directed approach. The following table contrasts organizational marketing with job development by demonstrating the differences in the focus, customer, and outcomes.

Component	Focus	Customer	Outcome
Organizational Marketing	Services, Customer satisfaction	Employers and Job Seekers	Increased Network
Job Development: The Path to Careers	Competitive Employment	Job Seeker	Job of Choice

Organizational marketing and job development are symbiotic or interrelated. That is, when an employment specialist is engaged in job development he or she can also be engaging in organizational marketing. This occurs because both marketing and job development involve:

- Relationship Building
- Service Marketing
- Informational Networking

Therefore, an organization might experience employment development benefits and/or outcomes while engaged in organizational marketing. It is not unusual for an employment specialist or other representative (i.e. board member, family member, etc.) to find a job when conducting marketing activities. However, this does not always occur nor is it the objective. Yet, this experience does explain how these two concepts often get confused. Ultimately, marketing will maintain and expand the organization's networks. When a job becomes an outcome of this process it is a secondary benefit. The following examples demonstrate two typical marketing contacts. In **Example 1**, the organizational marketing activity resulted in a strong job lead. **Example 2** demonstrates how a new marketing contact heightened the understanding of a local supported employment organization's services within the business community. While both examples may initially appear to have very different outcomes, the marketing network was enlarged in both instances.

Marketing Example #1:

Stan Marker is a member of the board of directors for Resource, Inc., an employment service company. One evening Stan gave a brief presentation to his Community Club on behalf of Resource Inc. Following the presentation, a club member contacted Stan to request a meeting with Resource, Inc. staff. The community club member expressed an interest in hiring someone from Resource Inc. to fill an immediate need for a programmer in her company. Stan immediately contacted the director of Resource Inc. to follow up on the job lead.

Marketing Example #2:

Kate Callahan is a family member of a person with a significant disability. Kate recently contacted Carl Parkins, the personnel director, at her corporate office. During their conversation, Kate inquired about current and future company job openings. Although there weren't any at the time, Carl asked Kate about the employment "program" that her family member attended. Kate described for Carl some of the employment services that were available through her company, SEEK. Carl promptly placed SEEK on the mailing list for job opening announcements.

As mentioned earlier, the organization has two primary customers: 1) individuals with significant disabilities; and 2) community employers. It is the responsibility of the organization and the employment specialist to meet the needs of *both* of these target groups. Employers want individuals to fill available personnel positions who can meet company quality and production standards. Individuals with significant disabilities desire a job of choice which matches their respective interests, preferences, strengths, and career goals. To maintain a competitive position within a community marketplace, the organization must operate with this customer-focused philosophy. The remaining section will describe the best practices associated with supported employment's customer-driven approach to organizational marketing.

BEST PRACTICES

Organizational marketing is not a great mystery. Marketing concepts and strategies are not new, all is tried and true! Supported employment marketing, as with any other business, relies on traditional, established activities first implemented in the business community decades ago. Often supported employment staff ask "What's new?" What *could* be considered as "new" is actually applying conventional business marketing practices and activities to supported employment services and organizations. The first step in initiating organizational marketing activities will be for the entire organization to evaluate its respective focus, values, and "mind set." The organization assesses whether or not it has the marketing mind-set by addressing the following terms and "personalizing" them to their own reality or corporate framework.

MARKETING MIND-SET/ORGANIZATION FOCUS

Terms	Definition
Customer-based	■ Customers drive the services provided
Customer-responsive	■ Business reacts immediately to needs, issues, etc. of its customers.

MARKETING MIND-SET/ORGANIZATION FOCUS	
Terms	**Definition**
Customer Satisfaction	■ Business pursues the satisfaction of customers.
Quality vs. Quantity	■ The organization measures organizational outcomes using quality standards such as length of employment, severity of the disability rather than number of people placed in employment during a given year.
Business Niche	■ The organization defines their unique services to be offered within the community.
Customer Identification	■ The organization defines their constituents or the target of their services.

The charge then becomes to approach marketing from a business perspective to link with other businesses within the community. Marketing-oriented agencies are driven by their customers wants and needs. **In fact, all activities are directed by the customers of the business. This approach requires a firm commitment from management, as well as the entire organization for the necessary time, money, and staff investment to successfully implement goals and objectives. All marketing activities and organizational practices must be integrated and coordinated.** The key is cooperation, not competition, within an organization! Marketing is not solely intensive promotion, rather, it is a process of coordinating a set of activities to achieve customer satisfaction.

The Message

As supported employment organizations move about their business community, using competitive, business oriented language is crucial. Marketing is an exchange of *valued* goods and services. Traditional marketing is a process in which the organization engages in several activities. These activities include the following areas:

- gathering information about the environment,
- determining benefits or wants people wish the agency to deliver,
- setting marketing objectives,
- determining which wants, and what portions of the community to serve,
- developing a marketing plan, and
- evaluating marketing efforts.

Crompton, J.L. & Lamb, C.W., 1986

Supported employment service providers are not human service agencies, rather, they are employment service agencies. This is a significant paradigm shift for many supported employment organizations, which assumes a competitive and valued offering of needed services. The language is business to business; the message is: "Our company can fill your personnel needs!" This shift establishes an approach which presents the service, as well as individuals with significant disabilities, in a positive, competent, and respected manner. In addition, it focuses the organization's resources on the business community and is designed to satisfy employment needs.

Involving supported employment participants in the development of organizational marketing materials and the shaping of a marketing approach is key to organizational success. Customer involvement further enhances an organization's responsiveness to respective customer needs. Job seekers also assist in identifying the services which will ultimately be provided.

Yet, as discussed previously, a supported employment organization must develop a marketing approach that is specific to both constituent groups. Employers are the primary target of marketing activities. The employment specialist or manager can interview employers to determine the specific factors and features that they deem essential when searching for qualified personnel to join their business. This is also a productive exercise for supported employment personnel to become familiar with business terms and priorities. The input received from community employers can be highlighted in a supported employment organization's marketing materials.

Not only is the message and language a very important aspect of marketing, so too is the expansion of the organization's network. This and customer satisfaction are the primary goals of marketing. Thus, the organization must enlist everyone employed or connected with their respective business. Mobilizing all associated networks will ensure continued growth. No one is exempt from marketing, everyone needs to participate, including: supported employment participants, family members, board members, management, direct service, and administrative staff.

A Marketing Plan: Developing a Marketing Strategy

Organizational marketing requires a creative plan of action and ongoing evaluation. The plan of action identifies the niche or service identity, competition, resources, customers served, and the outcomes which are expected. The results of such planning and development provides an overall strategy and framework for achieving success. Many of the questions which must be addressed in developing a marketing plan will overlap with similar themes. This will provide comprehensive information for the development of a marketing game plan.

When developing a marketing plan, the organization must seek answers to several different questions. The results or answers from these decisive questions will ultimately form the framework for the organizational marketing plan. These questions are listed in the following table.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING PLAN

- What is the mission of the organization?
- What are the abilities and preferences of the job seekers?
- Who is the audience?
- What services will be offered to satisfy the customers' needs?
- What are the economic trends?
- What are the outcomes expected?
- What is the message to the customers?
- What are the resources?
- What is the promotional plan? What tools will be used?
- How will success be determined?

What is the mission of the organization? A typical organization may have a mission statement which addresses the integration of people with disabilities into competitive employment. Yet, this is not enough. The organization needs to develop a mission statement that is specific to organizational marketing. This type of statement would focus on assisting employers with successfully hiring and integrating people with disabilities into the work force.

What are the abilities and preferences of job seekers? The answer to this question will provide some direction as to the types of employment opportunities that will be pursued, as well as the support needs of the job seeker. The abilities and preferences of these individuals will help to develop a framework of the services that will ultimately be offered. Supported employment services must be individualized. Therefore, services will vary based on the specific needs and interests of the job seekers. A clear response in this area provides some definition and foundation for building the plan.

Who is the audience? As mentioned earlier, supported employment organizations have two constituencies: employers and job seekers. Marketing activities are specifically designed and developed with the respective audience in mind. Therefore, an organization must delineate the activities and materials for each of the two constituents.

What are the needs of the customers? Once customers have been identified, a careful analysis will indicate specific needs. These needs must drive the services offered by a customer responsive organization. Possible employer needs may include: consultation on ADA; competent personnel to fill specific positions; or assistance with environmental analysis, job analysis, and task analysis. Job seekers, on the other hand, may need assistance with developing a resume; role playing an interview; identifying a job of choice; or developing a support network.

What services will be offered to satisfy the customers' needs? Many companies offer a variety of services. These include consultation regarding job and task analysis, job restructuring, information on ADA, employer labor source, job placement, family support, etc. Specific services should be marketed to specific audiences. For example: consultation and training on ADA is marketed to employers, job placement services are marketed to individuals with disabilities.

What are the economic trends? Canvassing the community to determine the types of companies, employment opportunities, and changes in the economic community is a critical component of marketing. Conducting a community labor analysis of this type will determine the path the organization will pursue. Geographic areas differ in respect to the types of jobs available. For example, a beach community may have a healthy tourist economy with heavy seasonal employment opportunities in the service industry, while a rural area may have jobs in farming, lumber, and service. Or perhaps a mid-west town with a steadily deteriorating manufacturing industry is engaged in recruiting companies to the area in an effort to diversify the economic base. Knowing what jobs exist in a community and developing economic areas will help determine a service niche.

What are the outcomes expected? Outcomes include such indicators as: jobs of choice, careers, and employment satisfaction. Many organizations list as a goal that a certain number of individuals will be employed. However, such goals do not address adequately the issue of quality. Although the fiscal reality may require numbers, organizations must look at quality, not quantity, when engaging in organizational marketing. Outcomes must reflect elements of quality such as choice, control, careers, and person-centered processes in terms of job seeker needs. Often, outcomes which address employer needs are not stated. If an organization is truly responsive to both of it's constituents, then both perspectives must be represented and addressed to have success in the community marketplace. Outcomes must also include satisfied employers. Employer centered outcomes can be determined by analyzing general employer needs and then incorporating these needs into organizational goals.

What is the message to the customers? The message is specifically designed to the customer. Marketing materials such as brochures should be developed for each of the customer groups: job seekers and employers. An organization should have a promotional brochure which addresses the needs of employers, as well as a separate brochure designed to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Often, marketing materials become outdated but are used even though they do not communicate an accurate message. For example, it is confusing to businesses to read a brochure which highlights the service of "putting people with disabilities in community jobs." Instead, the message for employers is "identifying employees to meet the personnel needs of today's business community." Using one large promotional brochure may initially cost less, but in the end will only short change marketing efforts. The message of promotional materials should be professional and concise.

What are the resources? This includes financial and personnel resources. What percentage of the budget is available for developing marketing materials and engaging in marketing activities? Which staff is available to conduct marketing? Again, it is critical that everyone in the organization is involved in some capacity. An organization must ask itself if everyone in the organization will conduct direct marketing. Or perhaps one individual will be hired to perform marketing on a part time or full time basis. Arguably, a more effective strategy would be to actively engage **everyone** in marketing endeavors. However, organizations often overlook marketing as they respond to the day-to-day happenings. In this case, perhaps having one staff person totally committed to organizational marketing would ensure continued networking. The bottom line is that *resources must be committed* in order to implement a marketing plan which will ensure a competitive edge and fill the needs of customers.

What is the promotional plan? What tools will be used? A promotional plan involves determining the most cost-effective marketing strategies based on the resources available and the outcomes desired. It would be an ideal world indeed if organizations had unlimited marketing budgets. This is not the case, and the organization must get "the biggest bang for their buck". Activities may include public service announcements, public speaking, attending community and civic meetings, offering specific training to employers and word of mouth advertising by customers. The plan also includes marketing materials or tools such as brochures, flyers, business cards, etc. Although these are traditional approaches, it is important to conduct them with specificity according to the customer and to remember to use business language. Creative marketing will call for many non-traditional methods which are designed to further stimulate an organization's well being. For example, a non-traditional method would include purchasing advertising placards which are placed at the tee boxes of each hole for a local fund raising golf tournament. The intent of such a strategy is to become known within the community. Additional strategies may include mass faxes, magazine and newspaper articles and advertisements, inserts in corporate and business newsletters, posted information at public places, web page on the Internet, and pens, notepads etc. with the company logo.

How will success be determined? Success is determined by evaluating customer satisfaction. An organization must put in place mechanisms to evaluate whether or not its customers are satisfied with the services offered and delivered. Before determining indicators of success, an organization will need to evaluate current marketing efforts. This will help an organization to see what is working and what is not. Evaluating current activities will lay a solid foundation for growth and success.

Answering these questions may involve several interested stakeholders. The following checklist which is found in the appendix of this chapter is a useful tool for tracking efforts to develop answers to these marketing questions. Using this checklist or one developed by your organization will ensure that all steps in the marketing process are completed. A responsible staff person should be identified next to each content area and the date that the activity is actually completed should be included. This will help ensure that all steps in the marketing process are completed within realistic time lines and that responsible individuals are identified for each area. Once this is completed the next step is to develop the actual marketing plan. The following table outlines the marketing process, with the remaining sections of this chapter giving further details for implementation.

MARKETING PROCESS

Step 1 ■ **Develop a Mission Statement**

Step 2 ■ **Conduct an Environmental Analysis**
- A. Stakeholders
- B. Consumer Research
- C. SWOT Analysis

Step 3 ■ **Identify Marketing Strategies**
- A. Product
- B. Place
- C. Price
- D. Promotion

Step 4 ■ **Specify Marketing Goals & Objectives**

Step 5 ■ **Implement Marketing Plan**

Step 6 ■ **Evaluate Marketing Plan**

RRTC Newsletter, Fall 1996

When reviewing the above model it is important to remember that the final step of evaluation is an on-going process. Therefore, an organizational marketing plan would never be written in stone. Rather, based upon the evaluation data the plan is revised as needed.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is the compass of an organization and directs marketing efforts. The mission shows the goal of the organization, how it will be accomplished, and the benefits to stakeholders. A mission should be clear and concise, providing the direction for all organizational activities. Every stakeholder of an organization should know the mission and what it truly means. This statement should not be just words on paper. Values and philosophy are directly reflected within this statement.

Example:

Our mission is to facilitate customer driven employment services within the community. We will accomplish this by delivering quality services to both customer groups: employers and job seekers. This will provide maximum value and opportunities for integrated employment of choice, as well as efficient and responsive personnel options for employers.

Environmental Analysis

The end result of completing an environmental analysis is the identification of the competition, the service niche, and the target groups to be served. Identifying competitors and target groups assists in determining if there is enough demand for specific services. Establishing a service identity will enhance one's competitive standing in the marketplace. As a service provider, the goal is to acquire the edge among competitors and to fill an unmet service need which determines a unique niche. The following example demonstrates how this can be accomplished.

Environmental Case Study:

Southson, a mid-size community in the Southwest, has one supported employment provider, Vista Employment Services. This organization concentrates on entry level positions in the food service industry. Their customer base is largely made up of individuals with mental retardation. A new company, Careers Unlimited, is opening a supported employment business in Southson. After reviewing the existing competitor, Careers Unlimited determined that employers were in need of a variety of employees across job positions. Thus, the niche identified by Careers Unlimited was marketing to employers across the spectrum of vocational opportunities and not limiting the choice of potential jobs, nor the population served.

With this strategy, the new service provider has created a niche. It is filling a capacity previously not offered in the community. In addition, the new supported employment company is expanding opportunities for customer choice.

An organization needs to acquire as much information as possible about local competitors to reduce duplication of services and to ensure their own success. Once a decision is made as to the customers to be served and businesses to be targeted, an organization has then positioned itself as a viable business in the community. By doing these things, an image is created which the community recognizes and identifies with a specific organization. Creating a competitive image or service identity will drive marketing activities. Customers and the public at large will know exactly what the organization does and the value they can expect from the organization as a provider of quality supported employment services.

Supported employment providers may provide services to individuals with physical, cognitive, and mental disabilities, while other organizations may limit or narrow their services to individuals with a specific disability such as mental retardation or sensory disabilities. In addition, providers may look for employment from businesses throughout the community, while others may concentrate on specific industries based on either size, type of business, location, or past history. These important decisions will vary from organization to organization. The key to success is completing a thorough environmental analysis which in turn drives the decisions an organization makes. The major components of an environmental analysis are the identification of stakeholders, conducting consumer research and completing a SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals who are invested in the mission and success of the organization. These players are the manifestation of the values and philosophy held by the supported employment organization. They have a commitment to the objectives of the organization and work to ensure success in reaching these objectives (RRTC Marketing Newsletter, 1995). Stakeholders may include people with disabilities, family members, board members, staff, community members, employers, professional organizations, human service agency staff, etc. An organization must determine the needs, wants, level of satisfaction, and involvement of all stakeholders.

Identification of Customers and Resources. The ability of an organization to be successful depends on how well it defines its customers and the resources available to reach the identified goals. The organization's strengths, weaknesses, and limitations must be understood. If a young supported employment organization attempted to provide employment services to all individuals with significant disabilities, they might quickly realize that resources were being spread too thinly and that their services were not cost effective. A broad and diverse customer base could strain many organizational resources such as staff, expertise, and/or funds.

The same is true for supported employment service providers who attempt to work with all community businesses. The provider organization needs to understand the labor market in which business is being conducted and develop a plan to target appropriate businesses. An organization exploring a marketing philosophy must analyze and determine the most appropriate business groups they will serve. The identification and selection of target groups will effect decisions regarding types of services, where and how services will be delivered, cost of services, personnel, and staff training needs. Job seeker choice is a critical aspect which must also be addressed when determining target employers. Identifying customers and resources will ultimately assist in identifying a company's niche and image.

SWOT Analysis. The SWOT, an acronym representing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, analysis is an internal and external assessment of the organization. The results of the analysis helps an organization determine services to be offered. An organization assesses their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal features of the organization. Examples of strengths may include dedicated and experienced staff and board members, customer centered services, excellent community image, and a large network. Weaknesses may include limited resources for staff training, a long waiting list, limited staff, and a fragmented network. Opportunities are positive actions an organization can take. These may include access to supportive employers, attending personnel training workshops, networking with a supportive school system. Threats are aspects which may negatively affect an organization. Threats may include lack of referrals, competition, negative community image of supported employment, or lack of funding. Once an organizational analysis has been conducted, an organization will then attempt to minimize the threats and weaknesses and highlight opportunities and strengths.

SWOT Case Study

Crestview Employment, Inc. was having difficulty marketing and providing services. Crestview conducted a SWOT analysis. Strengths included mission and services determined by customers, and an operating budget in "black ink." Weaknesses included high staff turnover, low staff morale, and low pay. Opportunities included a variety of businesses available in the community and a good working relationship with the state rehabilitation services agency. Threats include high staff turnover and broken services (periods in which remaining staff needed to support customers of a departing co-worker and inability to provide consistent services.)

Using the information collected in the SWOT analysis, Crestview pursued the following:

- Conducted a staff meeting to determine strategies to improve morale.
- Shifted budget resources to slight pay increases, staff development opportunities, and created a part-time position to provide marketing support to employment specialists.
- Scheduled bi-weekly staff meetings to address successes and issues.

By addressing these weaknesses and threats, Crestview was able to maximize their strengths and opportunities. Morale has increased and turnover has not been an issue in the last six months. Employment opportunities have also increased for customers.

Marketing Strategies

Strategies for successful marketing have been threaded throughout this chapter: determining services, organizational niche, the how, what, why, where, and when. In a nutshell, an organization will address the "Marketing Mix" or the P's of marketing. These are as follows:

FOUR P'S OF ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING

Product	Employment services an organization offers. Services address both customer needs and preferences. (continued)
Place	Where an organization provides services. The Labor Market Analysis determines location.
Price	The costs of services? Services may not be valued if presented as free. Services are often subsidized by the state through vendor arrangements.
Promotion	How an organization promotes their services. Public relations, brochures, flyers, advertisements, public service announcements, etc. Use business language.

Marketing Goals and Objectives

Once an organization has completed information gathering and determined its service niche, goals and objectives must be developed. As with any goal or objective, they must be *observable, measurable and obtainable.*

An example of an organization marketing goal is presented below.

Goal: Increase employer participation

Objective:

By 5/30/97, a twelve person business advisory council will be established.

By 8/30/97, Crestview, Inc. will have organizational membership in Chamber of Commerce, Retail Merchant's Association and Mason Human Resources Council.

By 11/30/97, the first employer of the year award will be presented.

RRTC Newsletter, Fall, 1996

Implementing a Marketing Plan

Networking is perhaps the single most important implementation strategy used in marketing. Once an agency has a service identity, networking is the tactic used to reap the benefits of the marketing plan. The adage, "it is not what you know, but who you know," sums up the critical functions of networking.

With whom should the organization or employment specialist network? Everyone in one's personal and professional circle everyone in the individual's circle and everyone who knows someone in the community. In other words, everyone! The organization's brainstorming and creativity in identifying networks directly reflects marketing success.

Neighbors, Family, and Friends. Neighbors, family, and friends are the most intimate foundation of a network. This pool of contacts is where marketing efforts should begin! Marketing is mobilized by approaching these individuals. Think about every circle of the job seeker's life to include school, church, social activities, etc. and determine how to engage these figures in the marketing effort. The employment specialist and the job seeker should increase marketing contacts by obtaining answers from family, friends and neighbors to the following questions.

NETWORKS TO INCREASE MARKETING CONTACTS

- Do you know of any available jobs in your network/s?
- Are jobs available where you work?
- Do you know anyone that is in a position to hire?
- Is this person in a direct position to hire?
- What company(s) is this person linked with?

Most jobs are obtained through informal networks of family, friends, and associates. The following is an example of how to use the family and friends network to obtain marketing leads.

Informal Networks Case Study

Mealburg, is a small rural town. Robert, as with many of his friends, used to be a member of the 4-H Club. After an accident which caused a brain injury, Robert told his employment specialist that he wanted to continue to work in farming. With the assistance of his neighbor Ken (whom he met through 4-H), Robert found a job at the local grainery. Ken had recently retired from the grainery and contacted the person who owned the mill. Robert, although he was not farming directly, was able to work with farmers throughout the community.

The above example demonstrates two benefits. One obvious benefit was that Robert acquired a job in a vocation of his choosing. The other, less obvious benefit, was that the Mealburg 4-H Club obtained an increased understanding of supported employment and the specified services of the organization through their knowledge of Robert. This is a good example of how initial marketing may also lead to a job.

Community Connections. Most communities have active civic organizations, business advisory councils, economic development councils, and so forth. These entities may be amenable to a presentation discussing the specific employment services that the organization offers. The employment specialist needs to find out when meetings are held and be placed on the meeting agenda. In addition, organizations can utilize publications or newsletters of community connections by contributing or including organizational marketing materials or a brief write-up of their services. In some cases, the employment specialist or manager will want to join these community organizations and participate as a community member.

This is an ideal strategy to become a part of the business network in the community. Employment organizations and/or staff should become active members of their local Chamber of Commerce. Although the Chamber of Commerce may be an entity which few supported employment organizations would think to join, it can be a rich source for networking. Membership can also assist the supported employment organization in keeping abreast of the local economic trends. Scanning newspapers or community publications for the latest economic trends and indicators, as well as new companies moving into the area is another productive activity. In addition, many communities have web site pages available on the Internet. These pages provide current information on community happenings or events and can serve as an additional source of information.

Employers. Employers are a priceless aspect of networking through personal and professional contacts and references. If employers are satisfied customers, they may be willing to network with other employers, provide a reference, or be quoted in marketing materials. This is successful relationship building at work. Casually mentioning an employer's name as a satisfied user of one's employment services is very effective. The employment specialist can even ask an employer if they would be interested in co-presenting, or mobilizing their own network. Ask satisfied employers to write letters of reference for your company.

Your Own Company. The employment specialist should use all levels of the organization to mobilize networks, such as the board of directors, customers, managerial, direct service, and support staff. The key is to use existing networks to increase connections, creating a dominos effect or wider circles of contacts. Word of mouth is the best advertising money can buy. Remember, networking is an ever-growing and never-ending process!

EXAMPLES OF MARKETING EFFORTS BY COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Supported employment programs throughout the country are interested in providing quality services and increasing the availability of supported employment in the community. There has been an increased interest in organizational marketing and its positive impact on the delivery of supported employment services and ultimately, its customers. Programs are experimenting with marketing concepts through many different avenues. Some programs have hired a marketing director and developed a marketing unit for the organization. Other programs have started by expanding efforts through an increase in public relations activities. In addition, supported employment providers are developing a variety of marketing strategies that are working for them in their own communities.

The following section will highlight several supported employment organizations in different parts of the country. These examples were selected because they emphasized various marketing strategies designed to increase awareness and job development. The methods that are used by each of the following organizations were designed to enhance customer satisfaction with supported employment services in the community.

West Virginia

Businesses have, in the past, complained about too many rehabilitation service providers knocking on their doors. This duplication of effort is often confusing for businesses. A group of providers in Huntington, West Virginia developed a unique solution to this problem. Nine supported employment providers came together to create Supported Employment Collaborative (SEC). They hired one person to market supported employment throughout the local area. This strategy provides a larger pool of qualified applicants for each job opening and a greater likelihood that a person with a significant disability will enter the workplace. Each of the nine providers contributes a portion of the marketer's salary. This saves money for other marketing activities and provides one contact person for businesses. SEC advertises in the local paper with "testimonials" from satisfied employers who have used their services.

Oklahoma

Marketing efforts take many approaches and should be structured and planned to meet the needs of the many identified customers, especially the employers. A program at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, developed a great motto "Structuring Environments for Success". This motto sends a positive marketing message to all of the customers. They have laid out specific marketing objectives and activities which will build solid relationships with the business community. Some of the marketing techniques used by this provider are:

- Tapping into business job referral networks through computer modem and FAX.
- Targeting specific businesses and conducting surveys.
- Developing relationships with economic development organizations.
- Participating in employer base groups.
- Highlight success and SE services in news media (radio, TV, newspaper, in-house employer newsletters) at a minimum once a month.
- Presenting awards to employers using business leaders as a presenter with follow-up media coverage.
- Designing a logo and slogan to put on T-shirts and sweatshirts for SE staff to wear at civic events and, when appropriate, at job sites.

These marketing efforts have made it much easier to find good job matches which are enduring and to meet customer's short and long term needs. The goal is *to develop good jobs by developing good relationships with employers.*

Washington, D.C.

In order to enhance its marketing efforts, St. John's Community Services has developed very effective marketing strategies for its business customers. One important area for providers in any community is developing awareness among businesses about the many capabilities and assets of individuals with disabilities and supported employment. St. John's through the D.C. Supported Employment Systems Change Project developed a marketing video which was short and professionally developed. Employers talked to other employers about supported employment. All D.C. area providers and their phone numbers were listed at the end of the video. In addition, a very unique brochure was developed which is geared toward the business community. It does not discuss or focus on disability but on services beneficial to businesses. These services include recruitment, training, and technical assistance. A very creative marketing strategy is the use of financial incentives to non-administrative staff to do organizational marketing and preliminary job development. The incentive program has carefully defined parameters and safeguards so quality placements are ensured.

EVALUATION

In order to maintain positive benefits to customers, the organization's staff must contantly evaluate the success of their program and services. Assessment helps the organization to maintain customer orientation as they work to provide quality services. The following list of questions may be useful in the evaluation process.

1. Are benefits being realized by the customers?
2. Are customers satisfied with the services provided?
3. What can be done differently to become more customer friendly and responsive?
4. Are the right services being offered?
5. Are objectives met in a timely manner?

It is important not to fall into the trap of ignoring the assessment findings. As part of the marketing plan, the organization regularly reviews goals, objectives, timelines, and the available resources. Answers to the previous questions will assist in evaluation efforts. Once these data are obtained, the organization can make needed adjustments to improve customer satisfaction, as well as the services offered.

BENEFITS OF ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING

Supported employment providers, rehabilitation agencies, and other social service public organizations usually ask two questions when attempting to convert to a marketing oriented approach: 1) What are the benefits? and 2) When will I see the benefits? A manager of a service organization must realize that people come to an organization not for the particular services offered, but for the expectation that the service or program will benefit them somehow. Over the past few years, many rehabilitation and supported employment programs have come to view themselves less as a rehabilitation provider and more as an employment services business. Once an organization starts designing its program and services around the benefits to its customers, it will be able to see the benefits to the organization. Marketing efforts do not always have an immediate effect or result. Patience and perseverance are important assets for today's market place. A marketing plan requires continual assessment and evaluation to determine the necessary resources to effectively implement the plan. A competitive organization looks beyond immediate issues and focuses on the long term or the future. Yet, one ingredient that is often overlooked is cost. Cost, as well as benefits to the customers, and the organization as a whole, is very important to achieving the marketing plan and ultimately marketing success. As discussed earlier, marketing consists of many interested and involved stakeholders. Albeit, the primary customers are the individuals with significant disabilities and community employers. In successful marketing, each of the customers glean certain benefits.

Customer Benefits. Individuals with a significant disability stand to gain several benefits from a strong organizational marketing approach. Most importantly, they will be assured that the services of the organization will be tailored to meet their unique needs. The following section lists possible customer benefits.

- Person-centered services and programs designed and delivered based on consumer information and input. People with significant disabilities will share their views, opinions, and experiences which will directly drive the services that they receive.
- Services and programs will be available to individuals within their own communities. Thus, increasing accessibility and availability of the competitive market place and the employment and service options.
- Increased opportunities to actually choose services and be involved in the service delivery process.
- Increased involvement in the overall management and operation of the service provider's organization.
- Employment opportunities available through the organization's improved relationships with businesses (this mutually benefits all customers and the organization).
- Increased opportunity for independent and key players to assist organizations with the assessment of quality and the types of services provided within a specific program in the community. This ensures continued responsiveness and competitiveness.

Employer Benefits. Supported employment and other rehabilitation organizations must be proactive when identifying the employer's wants and needs. This approach allows the organization to design their services in response to employer expectations and will result in clear-cut benefits to the employer. The following is a list of benefits that employers can expect.

- Assistance with understanding the ADA and how it will contribute to efforts to diversify the workforce.
- Exposure to technology goods and services which may assist their operational performance for all employees, including workers with disabilities.
- Availability of services to assist in recruitment, interviewing, testing, and accessibility as well as a resource related to specific personnel issues.

- Ability to reduce cost through appropriate tax incentives
- Quality workers who are reliable and meet the employment needs of the business.
- Ability to develop a one-to-one relationship with an organization promoting and providing quality employment resources.
- Ability to cut cost by job restructuring recommendations.

Organizational Benefits. Every organization, business, or agency engages in some type of marketing activity. The question is, how well is it done on an organizational level and how effective are the outcomes? When marketing is done correctly, the results and benefits are varied and plentiful. Possible organizational benefits include the following:

- A greater demand for employment services, at both a job seeker and employer level.
- A more supportive community which includes legislators, foundations, and businesses.
- An increase in status and reputation in the community and among customers.
- An increase in customer oriented staff, and an increase in staff morale.
- Competitors will be trying to be like your organization.
- Job seekers and employers will become promoters for staff and the organization.
- Greater resources may be realized.

SUMMARY

A market-based organization acknowledges the on-going nature of marketing activities, as well as the need for regular evaluation. Organizational marketing is indeed a time consuming activity; however, the rewards are well worth the effort. A competitive supported employment business which utilizes creativity and a clear plan of action will surely maximize resources, thus encouraging success!

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APPENDIX

- **Checklist for Tracking Organizational Marketing Activities**
- **Marketing Plan**

Checklist for Tracking Organizational Marketing Activities

Question	Stakeholder Responsible	Date Completed
What is the mission of the organization?		
What are the abilities and preferences of supported employment participants?		
What audience will be marketed?		
What are the needs of the customers?		
What services will be offered to satisfy customer needs?		
What are the economic trends?		
What are the outcomes expected?		
What is the message to customers?		

Question	Stakeholder Responsible	Date Completed
What are the resources?		
What is promotional plan? What tools will be used?		
How will success be determined?		

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PART I: PRE-DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Organization Name: ____

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Values/motivating factors influencing services: ____________________

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Mission Statement: _______________________________________

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Stakeholders/Needs/Wants/Satisfaction: ______________________

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Customer Needs and Satisfaction with Current Services: ____________________________

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List Strengths,,Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Treats (SWOT)	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Opportunities	
Threats	

Results of Environmental Analysis: ____________________________________

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PART II: THE PLAN

Goals	Objectives	Person/s Responsible	Timeline

Evaluation Plan/Schedule: ____

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3 Customer Profile

The critical first step in assisting an individual to find a job is getting to know that person through the development of a customer profile. This involves a variety of interview, observational, and information gathering activities aimed at capturing a picture of who the individual really is and what his or her interests, skills, and desires are. Traditionally referred to as customer assessment, this component of supported employment focuses on finding out as much as possible about an individual to establish a foundation which will serve as a guide during job development, job-site training, long term support, and the career advancement activities that follow. The development of a customer profile and related assessment activities are conducted for the purpose of assisting the customer with obtaining the type of work which offers the job characteristics and opportunities that best match the person's preferences and lifestyle.

The importance of developing a customer profile cannot be overemphasized or ignored. Without this critical step, it is likely that the entire supported employment process will in some way be affected. Despite its significance, developing a customer profile is frequently overlooked or short changed during supported employment implementation. In an effort to move forward with the job placement process, essential pre-employment activities are sometimes perceived as unnecessary, time consuming, or too costly forcing limited resources to be targeted for other activities. Often, one piece of the profile, such as an evaluation conducted by another party or a predetermined image from a workshop staff, are substituted as the only source from which the remaining decisions are made. The truth of the matter is that any short cuts taken during the up front end are likely to result in increased time in the long run due to additional training and support needs, customer dissatisfaction, or job loss and replacement issues.

Most individuals who are referred for supported employment have undergone numerous evaluations throughout their lives to determine eligibility for services. At times, these formal evaluations can be informative; however, employment specialists must keep in perspective that formal evaluations are only one small piece of the profile process. Careful consideration needs to be made as to the purpose of previous evaluations, the procedures and instruments used, and the context of the interpretations.

Typically, vocational evaluations or standardized tests are conducted for a specific purpose in which a person must meet a certain level or criteria, forming the basis for the interpretations and recommendations that follow. In many circumstances, this criteria is unrelated to that which is actually required by a competitive job or the skills that an individual would need to possess in order to perform the job. Keeping this important point in mind, it is easy to see how the valuable information that would contribute to an individual becoming employed is **not likely** to be obtained with these methods.

For example, an intelligence test may be performed for the purpose of diagnosis. However, an IQ score would not provide information for making employment and support decisions, such as where to work or how to teach job skills. Similarly, reports that are interpreted developmentally, for example, stating that an individual's level of functioning is at the third grade level, offer little information about the person's employment capabilities or support needs. Finally, a paper and pencil test administered in a classroom setting to assess an individual's "readiness" for work is likely to indicate significant skill deficits despite the person's ability to perform tasks independently in the natural environment where they occur.

In contrast, a functional description of the person's abilities provides a much clearer picture of his or her skills and support needs, such as reads numbers on a watch but is unaware of time, rides a bus with assistance, or can follow one-step directions with a verbal prompt or picture cue. Very different decisions regarding training and support to assist an individual with work would be made if the decisions were based upon direct observation or conversations with the family and individual as opposed to test results. This chapter describes the important characteristics central to the completion of a functional assessment which results in useful and relevant information representative of the individual's gifts, interests, and preferences. Following this, strategies and techniques for gathering assessment information and developing a customer profile for use in assisting an individual with becoming employed will be described.

CHANGING FROM THE "OLD WAY" OF DOING ASSESSMENTS

How assessments are planned or conducted, and what methods are used will depend upon the policies and procedures of each supported employment agency. Often, procedures are used, because this is the "way things have always been done". However, careful scrutiny should be given to just exactly how the assessment process was developed. Perhaps, the guidelines were established when the program's focus was on providing center-based (e.g., sheltered workshop, work activity day program) rather than community-based employment, both of which have a very different set of expectations. Similarly, the assessment process may have been designed prior to supported employment legislative mandates and funding allocations when a more traditional approach to vocational services was in place. Finally, outside referral sources or funding resources may be placing pressure on programs to conduct assessments a certain way which rely on evaluative measures and omit many of the essential core elements. If employment specialists find themselves caught in the midst of these and other scenarios which restrict their ability to conduct assessments in the way that this chapter describes, they should not despair. Even if a program or agency is not willing to adopt the approaches outlined in this chapter, **an employment specialist can make a difference**, with how supported employment services are provided. At a minimum, they can follow some of the guiding principles and techniques in their everyday activities.

For example, read beyond the judgments made about a customer in a standardized report. Do not characterize a behavior as good or bad, or something that will prohibit employment. Define a behavior as one more unique piece of information about the customer in the context of training and support needs. In addition, capture every opportunity to talk with each customer and other key persons in his or her life to find out their dreams, expectations, and wishes. When performing other related supported employment activities, incorporate informal assessment techniques at the same time. As the advantages associated with this assessment approach become obvious, these strategies will have an impact upon the employment outcomes of the customers being served and may have a rippling effect within a program's practices as well.

PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

The entire supported employment process should be guided by the customer with the profile process being central to that endeavor. Remember, the customer will be working at the job that he or she gets, and a critical piece of being successful and satisfied at work is choosing what you are doing (Parent, in press). If other persons, particularly those who do not know the customer well, make decisions about what they feel is "best", then the chance of the employment situation being rewarding to the customer is jeopardized.

Often, individuals with disabilities express frustration that professionals undermine their choices by not providing them with all the information. Or, professionals prescreen what the individual needs to know, or they make initial choices for the customer based on what they feel is most appropriate for the person (Brooke, Barcus, & Inge, 1992). Questions are sometimes phrased as false choices, such as: "would you like to work at a restaurant?" "Would you like to work at the grocery store or not at all?" Someone who has never worked or is anxious to have a job may select an option that he or she doesn't want resulting in a short employment tenure through job loss or an effort to change jobs. While some programs and agencies have done a tremendous job assisting persons with career advancement and job mobility, the reality of the situation is that individuals typically keep the first job they get. Provisions may be in place to make changes; however, it is not uncommon for a customer to have a lengthy wait for services following a decision to move on.

Pursuing an individual's employment interests and career path using a person-centered approach can create a "road map" for making the necessary job choices and career advancements that are critical to achieving one's goals. The process begins by focusing on the individual's dreams, and how they can be realized. The identification of the customer's dreams is accomplished by getting to know the person and what is important to him or her. For instance, spending time with the person to gain his/her trust and confidence is clearly the first step in the process.

Strategies for Developing Relationships and Defining the Customer's Career Path

The only way an employment specialist can represent supported employment customers to employers is to believe in and know their customers' abilities and interests. This does not mean reading standardized test results, formal records, previous medical or psychological reports, or case study notes written by former professionals involved with the customer. This information does not allow the employment specialist to get to know the real human being behind the pieces of paper.

For example, information such as what the customer enjoys, what a day in his or her life is like, what kinds of things are of personal interest, and what are stressful concerns, are lost in the translation of a second party report or unrelated evaluation. Interestingly, these factors are precisely what contribute to the decisions regarding the kind of work and characteristics of the job (e.g., hours, location, type of business, co-workers) that an individual chooses to do and, most importantly, is happiest doing. For any employee, with or without a disability, the greatest satisfaction tends to result when the attributes of the employment situation are most compatible with his or her personal tastes and real life circumstances.

An important way to begin to think about getting to know a supported employment customer is to think about yourself. Consider all of the many factors that come together to make you the person who you are. Now, speculate about how you would feel if the only introduction someone had about you was an isolated description of one facet of your life. It is quite likely that this written summary would portray a significantly different image and surely an incomplete or inadequate picture of who you are.

Similarly, if you reflect upon yourself, you can gain insight into what it takes to get to know you, and how this can be accomplished. Chances are that what you discover will be useful techniques for breaking the ice and developing the important relationship between the employment specialist and the customer. The following questions provide some points for an employment specialist to consider about herself or himself before attempting to get to know a new supported employment customer.

- What makes you comfortable and eases the tension in an uncomfortable or unfamiliar situation?
- What types of things make it difficult for you to share information, and what strategies help you to open up?
- What do you like others to do when you are in a position to work with or provide information to someone in authority or with decision-making power?

Spend Time Getting to Know the Customer

When arranging a time to get to know the customer, it is best to suggest a comfortable location of his or her choice (e.g., the person's home, a restaurant, or a park bench). The situation to avoid is meeting at the organization's office. Typically, an office setting is intimidating, particularly for customers who have a long history of meeting with service providers and other professionals. Some of these experiences most likely have not been favorable. In addition, the office setting places the employment specialist in a position of power which may threaten the customer rather than foster the development of a relationship.

Meeting on the customer's "turf" automatically instills a certain degree of comfort as well as provides a reference point and framework from which the employment specialist can pose questions. Characteristics about the selected meeting place can provide clues that are useful in identifying a work setting for the customer. For example, if the customer chooses to meet at a restaurant, the employment specialist may find out if this is a favorite place for the individual and why. This type of information usually will go unnoticed in a meeting at the office, because the right questions are never asked. Or, the customer may feel it is not important to offer; however, other questions about interests, friends, and potential job choices may naturally evolve.

Perhaps a family member, friend, or advocate will participate in the initial meeting, sometimes making "going to them" much easier and more convenient than if they came to the supported employment organization. In addition, having an advocate or family member present may be important when meeting with a person who is challenged by limited communication skills. The employment specialist should make sure that the customer has chosen this advocate or person if a third party is included in the meeting.

During the initial meeting, take the time to get acquainted engaging in small talk about topics and conversational items that the customer feels comfortable with and can contribute to. The employment specialist may want to ask family members or friends to supply topics of interest that may put the customer at ease such as a favorite sport, love of animals, particular music interest, and so forth.

Observe the customer's method of communication: verbal as well as nonverbal messages, mannerisms, gestures, and body language. Developing a sense of the person's communication style with familiar topics will be a major advantage once the discussion shifts to information that the customer shares about herself or himself which the employment specialist may not be aware of and does not want to miss. Understanding the individual's communication system will also allow the employment specialist to determine the best means of asking, responding, or speaking in a way that is meaningful for the customer.

Under ideal conditions, the employment specialist should set up a situation such as going to a baseball game, to the mall, or other identified favorite activity. Actually engaging in the activity will stimulate more conversation and trust than simply talking about what the person likes to do. In addition, the employment specialist can begin to informally assess the customer's gifts and skills within a community environment.

Sarah's Case Study Example

Sarah and her employment specialist decided to meet at the mall's food court near Sarah's home. Prior to the meeting, the employment specialist went to the mall and made a list of skills that he might observe her completing during their visit. The employment specialist also realized that visiting the mall may provide information on Sarah's leisure interests that could stimulate ideas for jobs. The following table provides a sample of some of the items on his list.

INFORMAL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

- **Transportation & Safety**
  1. How does Sarah travel to the mall (bus, special transportation, parent, friend)?
  2. Is she dropped off at the entrance or can she find her way to the door through the parking lot?
  3. Does she watch for cars?
- **Mobility**
  1. Does Sarah open the mall door and maneuver her power chair through the door?
  2. Is she able to maneuver around the chairs and tables in the food court?
  3. Can she move through the mall without bumping into people, merchandise, or other barriers?

(continued)

- **Visiting a Store**
  1. What store does Sarah choose to visit?
  2. Can she find her way to the store?
  3. Can she "window" shop, or does she want to spend money?
- **Purchasing a Snack**
  1. Which food stand does Sarah select? What are her food choices?
  2. How does she communicate with the server?
  3. Does she buy a snack based on how much money she has? Does she know how much change to expect?
  4. Can she physically manipulate the money?
- **Eating the Snack**
  1. How does Sarah get her food to the table?
  2. Does she need any assistance with the food containers or eating?
  3. Who initiates conversation?
  4. What topics are discussed?

Conduct an Initial Interview

The purpose of an initial interview must be explained fully at the time of the appointment as well as during the initial few minutes of the meeting. Some people may not know what supported employment is, the role of the employment specialist, or why this meeting is taking place. As most would attest, it is difficult to respond to questions and initiate important information if you are confused or unsure of what someone will do with what you tell them.

Describe the employment specialist's role; describe what the customer can expect to accomplish with support; and why it is important to get to know the person before getting him or her a job. If the employment specialist explains that the information will not be used to exclude the person but to find that perfect "niche" in the job market, time will be well spent setting the stage for a rich and valuable information exchange. Sharing materials and resources about supported employment and the organization can further explain and clarify what the employment specialist is saying and provide an easy reference after the meeting is over.

Similarly, the employment specialist should not rely on one method of asking questions, rather present the options in a variety of ways. For example, ask yes or no questions, phrase as multiple choice, provide true/false alternatives, present open-ended opportunities, and repeat answers back to the customer for verification. An individual may answer yes to every question, always choose the last response, or always agree with the false selection. This may not be the customer's real choice. Instead, the answer may be what the individual is familiar with, a reflection of his or her skill level, or the only choice that the customer remembers when the options are presented. The employment specialist can determine the individual's response pattern by asking questions about a subject that he or she knows the answer to and rephrasing and repeating the question several times to see what type of questioning format is the easiest and most effective for the customer's particular style. Examples of types of questions important to explore are listed in the following table. Remember that a customer's advocate, friend, or family member also may be able to provide additional information in these areas if the customer has a difficult time making her or his wants and desires known.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK THE CUSTOMER

- **What do you like to do?**
  (interests, preferences)
- **What skills do you have?**
  (talents, gifts, abilities, education)
- **What experiences have you had?**
  (employment, volunteer, training, personal development)
- **What work conditions would you like to have?**
  (hours/schedule, job duties, work environment, supervision)
- **What financial and non-monetary benefits do you need or want?**
  (wages, health insurance, vacation, personal time, sick time)
- **What kind of social environment would you like?**
  (co-workers, opportunities for socialization, lunch/breaks)
- **What type of services do you need?**
  (case management, independent living, employment, education)
- **What types of supports do you need or want?**
  (personal, workplace, community)
- **What type of job would you like?**
  (type of work, location, size of company, advancement)
- **What are your career/life goals?**
  (employment, living arrangements, leisure activities, relationships)

The Individual Supports Assessment Form located in the Appendix of this chapter provides a useful guide for the employment specialist in asking questions or for the customer and his or her family member(s) to complete on their own. Most individuals function on a daily basis with a multitude of supports that they rely on in their everyday lives. Because these routines and supports are so familiar, they are often taken for granted and not offered as pertinent information. For instance, if a member of the church drives the individual to the YMCA several days a week, perhaps he would also drive him to work. A form such as the one provided in the appendix of this chapter can trigger the recollection of valuable information so that no support or indication of preference is overlooked.

Before the end of the meeting, ask for questions and discuss what next steps can be anticipated. Make sure that contact information has been exchanged and each person's preferences for communicating with each other have been discussed. One idea is to describe ways that information thought of after the meeting can be recorded so as not to be forgotten before the next conversation. For example, a great idea for a job noticed while passing by in the car with one's parents is likely to be overlooked if a means of recalling or jotting it down are not explored and pre-arranged.

Customer-Driven Support Teams

Many supported employment customers are beginning to use support teams to assist them in identifying a career path. This has been referred to in the literature as a "Circle of Support" or "Circle of Friends" (Falvey, Forest, Pearpoint, Rosenberg, 1993; Perske, 1989). This chapter will refer to this group of individuals as a "customer-driven support team."

Typically, the team is made up of friends, family, professionals, and any other persons involved in the customer's life (O'Brien & Lovett, 1992; Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993). A supported employment team may include the customer, her or his employment specialist, vocational rehabilitation counselor, case worker, friends and family members, and so forth. It is important to remember that teams consist only of those individuals selected by the customer. While an employment specialist may feel that a particular person should participate, he or she is not included if this is the wish of the customer.

The customer-driven support team can use any number of person-centered approaches to assist the customer in identifying her/his employment interests and strengths. These strategies have been referred to as "personal futures planning", "lifestyle planning", "MAPS", and "PATH". Typically, a team meets to explore what the individual wants his or her future to be like. Planning sessions provide a forum for everyone to brainstorm and share their ideas and expertise to formulate a blueprint for making the customer's dreams a reality. Finding out what the individual would like to do, remembering that she or he may not be able to articulate specific careers, offering suggestions of jobs in that area, and determining whatever it takes for him or her to be able to pursue these interests and achieve the greatest degree of satisfaction is just one of the many major accomplishments resulting from a customer-driven approach to services.

Identifying the Career Path

Critical to implementing a person-centered philosophy is the concept of encouraging customers to "dream" about their futures. Professionals cannot make judgements about a customer's choices or career path. During one meeting, a team member almost stopped the "dreaming" process by telling the customer that his goals for the future were unrealistic. The customer was dreaming about being a lawyer or working in a bank. However, as the meeting progressed, the team realized that the customer had this dream, because he wanted to work in an office, wear a suit or nice clothes, and be around professional people. Typically, behind every dream is important information that will direct the customer and her/his team towards meaningful goals.

MAPS as a Planning Tool

Making Action Plans (MAPS) is one person-centered tool that has been used to assist individuals in planning their futures (Falvey et al., 1995). This is a facilitated process in which a facilitator and recorder work with an individual and his/her team to identify the person's gifts and strengths. There are eight key questions that are addressed during a MAPS meeting. Usually, these questions are answered in order, but a group may choose to conduct a meeting differently based on the customer's needs.

Participants at the meeting are selected by the customer who are willing and able to assist in identifying the customer's dreams, interests, and support needs. As previously stated, team meetings can be held anywhere, but the room used should be comfortable and provide a relaxed atmosphere for planning. Meeting at the supported employment agency is not recommended, unless this is specifically the choice of the customer. The eight questions that form the structure for the MAPS process are listed in the following table.

MAPS AS A PLANNING TOOL

Question #1:	What is a MAP?
Questions #2:	What is the person's history or story?
Question #3:	What are the person's dreams?
Question #4:	What are the person's nightmares?
Question #5:	Who is the person?
Questions #6:	What are the person's strengths, gifts, and talents?
Question #7:	What does the person need?
Question #8:	What is the plan of action?

(Forest & Pearpoint, 1992)

The key to successfully completing a MAPS is to have a positive approach to the process. The individual's gifts and talents should be highlighted, and she or he should never be described in terms of a disability label or problem. If the customer is challenged by a specific issue, then the team needs to state this in terms of the person's support needs.

The "nightmare" question allows the group to think about negative events that may happen. These nightmares also can provide some valuable insight into job characteristics that should be avoided. For instance, if a customer describes his/her nightmare in terms of never having any friends, this is a cue to avoid jobs with limited social interactions.

Question number 7 asks the customer and her/his team members to consider what the customer will need in terms of people and resources to make his/her dream a reality. During the discussion of this question, the customer may begin to identify specific individuals who have not been invited to the meeting as key implementers in the plan. For instance, if the dream is to become employed using supported employment and the rehabilitation counselor is not present, the customer may realize that the counselor needs an invitation to become a team member.

Question 7 leads nicely into question 8 which asks the customer and team to identify a plan of action. The customer and team members will need to identify who will do what and when (Falvey et al., 1993). The following is a list of sample items off Susan's plan of action.

- Janice, a family friend, will assist Susan in getting a new hairstyle for work that she can take care of independently before 6-11.
- Susan and Bill, the employment specialist, will look through the classified section of the paper weekly to discuss job possibilities. Bill will update Susan during these weekly discussions on all job leads that he identifies.
- Susan will talk with her case manager and schedule a meeting to discuss a new augmentative communication device by 6-15.
- Chuck, a peer mentor, will assist Susan in obtaining information on adult literacy by 7-1.

PATH as a Planning Tool

The *Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope* (PATH) process can be used to identify each customer's dreams and goals for employment, specify accomplishments which will occur in a one year time period, and establish intermediate three month, one month, and one week objectives and activities toward meeting the customer's career goal. Essentially, PATH developed from the MAPS process and was designed to put into place a plan of action for the focus person (Pearpoint, O'Brien, Forest, (1993). Literally, the process can identify an employment "path" for customers to pursue.

A PATH is led by a group facilitator and a graphic recorder. These two individuals are preferably "neutral" and not members of the customer's support team. They guide a brainstorming meeting by recording the discussion pictorially. Eight steps are completed and must be discussed in order to preserve the integrity of the process. The following table lists these steps.

PATH: PLANNING ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE

Step 1: The North Star - The Dream

Step 2: Sensing The Goal - Positive & Possible

Step 3: Grounding in the Now

Step 4: Who Do We Enroll?

Step 5: Recognizing Ways to Build Strength

Step 6: Charting Actions for the Next 3 Months

Step 7: Planning the Next Month's Work

Step 8: Committing to the Next Step

(Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993)

The facilitator's responsibility is to assist the team in addressing each of these eight steps of the PATH. The customer should be encouraged to "dream" what her/his future looks like without any restrictions. Once this has occurred, the customer can talk about the goals that have been accomplished during a specified time period. This could be one year, six months, or any other length of time that is just past what the person can be predict. The facilitator encourages the customer to think about these events as if they have already happened. Goals identified in this step should be positive and possible (Pearpoint et al., 1993). If the customer has difficulty communicating or is unable to think of events in the future, the facilitator should encourage the team members to assist by describing things that they feel have happened. Of course, these career goals or events should always be verified by the customer, before they are placed on the person's PATH.

The next steps require the customer to think about how he/she feels now, who needs to assist in the PATH, and how the customer builds strength. Obviously, identifying individuals to enroll in the support team is a critical step towards assisting a customer in meeting his/her career goals. For instance, one customer realized that she would need to get her personal care attendants enrolled in order to successfully get dressed and be prepared to go to work everyday in a timely fashion. She also identified that she builds strength by going to bed every night by 10:00 p.m. and not getting out of bed before 8:00 a.m. Since it requires a minimum of 1½ hours for the customer to get dressed, the employment specialist learned that working before 10:30 in the morning would not be feasible for this particular customer.

The final three steps of the PATH ask the customer and his/her support team to actually set actions for the next few months. Again, the facilitator asks the group to talk in the past tense. Such as, "I have opened a checking account." "I have participated in three situational assessments to identify the type of career that I would like to pursue." The customer and the support team members should be specific about who does what and when it will be accomplished. The employment specialist may be the logical person to assist the customer in monitoring the progress that occurs towards meeting the customer's career path.

The reader is encouraged to study the materials referenced in this section and others before implementing MAPS or PATH. There are several videotapes available through Inclusion Press which also are excellent resources. The following is an excerpt from one customer's PATH. The appendix of this chapter provides a pictorial representation of this work.

Sample PATH: Career Planning Activities for One Customer

Career Dream for the Future

A job where I...

- can help others.
- can work around people.
- work with animals (e.g., pet store, veterinarian's office, boarding facility, park, etc.); or
- work with flowers such as at a florist; or
- work in a department store.

One Year Goals

I have...

- selected a job, and I am working!
- opened a checking and savings account.
- bought new clothes with earnings.
- joined a woman's group such as the Garden Club.

I am...

- earning enough money to pay my own bills (e.g., telephone bill).
- making new friends.
- going out into the community independently (e.g., attending concerts or civic, going shopping, going out to dinner, etc.).

Three Months Goals and Objectives

I have...

- completed a situational assessment at three different work sites based on my specific interests (e.g., pet store, florist, department store);
- narrowed my job interests and choices (hopefully identified a job!);
- gone on 3-4 job interviews;
- identified where I want to go and used the accessible bus system at least 3 times by myself;
- gone to a concert with friends at least once without assistance!
- gone out to dinner with a friend at least once without assistance!

One Month Goals and Objectives

I have...

- picked out my interview outfit;
- identified the sites for my situational assessments;
- ridden the accessible bus system with my mentor at least once a week;
- attended regularly scheduled support group meetings.

Next Week's Activities

I will...

- buy a day planner to keep up with my new schedule;
- talk with my personal care nurse about my job goals;
- visit at least one job site to begin narrowing my choices for situational assessment;
- review the want ads to get an idea about available jobs;
- role play having an interview with my mentor;
- attend a support group with other project customers.

CONDUCTING FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

It is important to remember that the reason for conducting an assessment is to determine a customer's skills and interests, learning style, behavioral characteristics, and support needs so that employment and support decisions can be made with the person which accurately reflect what she or he wants and needs. The most useful information for an individual with a severe disability is obtained when a functional assessment approach guides all aspects of the process including the activities that are conducted, the methods that are used, and the manner with which they are interpreted.

A functional assessment is not performed to "screen out" an individual from employment or deny access to a desired activity; rather, an assessment should be conducted to determine the level and intensity of support that the customer will need in order to achieve maximum independence. It is characterized by a reliance on obtaining information from a variety of sources, focusing on actual behaviors in real environments where they occur, and documenting the information in behavioral terms without value judgments.

Looking at the functional abilities of the customer in the context of what is required by the environment where the skill is to be performed, allows an accurate assessment to be conducted under the natural circumstances and cues of the work environment where the skill will occur. Any gaps between what is required by the job site and what the worker is able to do can be lessened with the application of instructional techniques and individualized supports that meet the customer's specific needs. Often, many of the gaps are resolved through negotiations with the employer and specific job carving during job development that eliminate the need altogether. Other times, assistive technology, compensatory strategies, rehabilitation engineering, personal assistant services, or behavioral training techniques will reduce the difference between what is required and what the individual is able to do.

However, if assessments are written in a way to screen someone from receiving services, then the chance to explore and apply these strategies will go undetected. For example, if the assessment indicates a stamina issue requiring the customer to build up endurance before becoming employed, then little information is relayed to the employment specialist to assist with employment decisions. Two very different pictures and support needs are suggested by the following functional information: 1) Paul has a severe heart condition requiring a sit-down job or one that is not strenuous and offers frequent breaks throughout the shift. 2) Barbara has no physical limitations but has been sitting at home for an extended period of time and works for one hour before saying she is tired and requesting a break. Any information about an individual can be very misleading if not considered within the context of how it was obtained and perhaps more importantly, how it was interpreted.

Individualized and Comprehensive

A thorough assessment process offers the opportunity to develop an image of the entire person without overlooking small details which may significantly affect the choices someone makes regarding his or her employment situation. This involves the gathering of information from a variety of sources including: talking with the individual, meeting with the family, conducting community based assessments, observing the individual in multiple environments, reviewing formal records, and any other activities that are relevant to that person's life. Even though the methods of conducting assessments are similar for all individuals, the manner in which they are implemented may vary based on what is important for that person.

For example, observing in multiple environments may mean home and school for one customer, the workshop and community volunteer experience for another, or home and paid work situation for someone else. Other customers may offer additional opportunities that are equally important in their life, such as going out for coffee, grocery shopping, working on the computer, or collecting recycling products from their home. A good rule of thumb is to keep in mind the guiding principles of assessment plan in completing the specific strategies outlined for developing a customer profile, and remain open and flexible enough to make changes as directed by the customer.

Observe in Multiple Environments

Everyone acts differently depending upon the situation they are in and how familiar they are with the environment. For example, quite a different impression is presented in an interview with an employer than at the company sponsored softball game. Similarly, someone will appear very different in a workshop setting surrounded by other individuals with a disability than she or he would in a competitive business setting with other persons who do not have disabilities. It is important to arrange to visit the customer in a variety of different places and situations including the activities and settings he or she frequently participates in. Previously in this chapter, suggestions were made for assessing the customer's skills and interests by getting to know the person in an environment of his/her choice. These can include the individual's home, the local community, his or her school, a volunteer job, vocational training site, or leisure/recreational activity.

Ask the customer what kinds of things she or he is doing and if it would be alright to visit and observe him or her in that setting. Contact the person in charge, such as the teacher, employer, trainer, or staff member, and schedule a time that the observation will not interfere but will also still provide an opportunity to observe the customer's typical routines and activities. The employment specialist should explain why he/she is coming as well as to request time to speak with the representative who knows the customer best to gain additional insight into his or her work interests and attributes. While the employment specialist is there, be sure to pay attention to: 1) specific tasks (e.g., delivering mail, bagging groceries, answering a telephone); 2) particular skills (e.g., discriminating among objects, orienting around the area, using a watch); 3) physical abilities (e.g. strength, mobility, agility); 4) personality characteristics (e.g., shy, personable, tolerance for stress); 5) environmental conditions (e.g., noise, temperature, congestion); 6) interpersonal relationships (e.g., friendships, proximity, communication); and likes and dislikes (e.g., location, schedule, nature of activity). This is a good opportunity to talk with the customer and have him or her describe and show what she or he is doing.

COMMUNITY-BASED ASSESSMENTS

Two methods of conducting functional assessment activities include: situational and community assessments. Both involve having the customer take part in actual events that occur in business settings and other community environments. In this way, an individual can indicate what he or she likes by visiting or participating in the actual environments where the events occur. This allows someone to express preferences that may not be communicated, exhibit abilities that may go undetected and make choices from experiences that may never be known.

Situational Assessment

A situational assessment provides a customer with the opportunity to perform job tasks in real work environments in the community (Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990). Usually, a situational assessment is conducted for a four hour period in two to three different types of jobs in the community which are representative of the local labor market. However, a general guideline for the length of an assessment is that it should reflect the customer's future work day. If the individual wants to work full time, then he or she should participate in assessments that reflect a full day of work.

Any business can be a potential site identified from any number of experiences, contacts, or resources that the employment specialist is aware of (e.g., past employment, personal contacts, job development, previous supported employment setting, newspaper, telephone book, and so forth). However, the sites selected for any specific customer depends on the choices of the individual. For instance, one customer during her PATH meeting identified that she thought a job at a pet store or florist may be something that she would like. The employment specialist then set up two situational assessments in the community to give her the opportunity to see if these were possible career paths for the customer.

If the customer is unable to identify specific ideas about a career path, then situational assessments can be even more valuable to the individual and the employment specialist. A variety of job types should be explored, and the customer's reaction to each recorded to compare which may be the most appropriate and most preferred job choice. It is important to note that it is not necessarily assumed that a customer will choose to work in one of the types of businesses where the situational assessments are conducted, but an opportunity is provided to assist the customer with determining the career goal, work environment, job characteristics, or business that she or he might like.

For example, one individual who chose to complete a laundry assessment began crying almost immediately and refused to fold the linens. The employment specialist quickly asked if she would like to do housekeeping, which she readily agreed to. The customer did an excellent job vacuuming, making the bed, and cleaning the room very quickly and somewhat independently. At first glance, it would appear that she loved to clean and would eagerly accept a job involving cleaning, however, she and her parents both confirmed that she hated doing any type of cleaning duties. After spending more time together and participating in additional assessment activities, it was discovered that she did not like the laundry, because it was hot, loud, and the stack of towels never ended. Whereas, in the hotel room the tasks were well-defined, there was no noise, no other people were around, and the room was cool. In addition to identifying some of the aspects of the job that the customer would be interested in, and those she would not like, the use of compensatory strategies that would allow her to self-monitor without co-worker prompting and which would give her closure at the completion of a task were identified and put into place at her job. Incidentally, her job choice, a lobby attendant at a fast food restaurant, was decided for all of the reasons cited above from the assessments as well as the fact that the majority of her friends were working there.

Situational assessments are useful in determining the type of employment services a customer can benefit from and the level and intensity of supports she or he will need. Observing an individual performing real work in multiple environments provides an indication of her or his work characteristics, interests, skills, abilities, learning style, and support needs. In addition, a situational assessment offers the individual an opportunity to witness different types of jobs and their requirements first-hand to assist him or her with making a job choice. A situational assessment form is located in the appendix of this chapter; however, programs are encouraged to develop their own forms based on the needs of their customers.

Setting Up Assessment Sites

Most employers are more than willing to participate in this type of activity. If an agency already has a relationship with the employer then probably the employment specialist will have an idea of the employer's receptivity, the positions to be targeted, and the general logistical arrangements. If the employment specialist is contacting a business for the first time in order to arrange a situational assessment, much of the information gathering can be completed at the same time that the employment specialist is requesting the employer's participation.

When talking with the employer it is very important to be clear about what the supported employment agency would like. Communicate in a professional manner using business terminology and avoid professional jargon. Most employers are not going to be familiar with situational or community-based assessment as this is not the typical practice when hiring most employees. However, employers understand the concept of hiring a good worker who can do the job, really wants to work there, and will be a loyal, reliable employee. Explaining that the best way to help someone find a job that they really want and to know how to support the individual and employer is to "try out" some brief work experiences is typically well-received. Tell the employer that the employment specialist would like to select one or more positions within the company, learn how to do them, select times that the presence of two additional people wouldn't be disruptive to the regular workflow. Find out her or his needs, scheduling preferences, and capacity for conducting multiple assessments over time.

Once agreement has been reached, several steps are suggested which have been found to be helpful. First, observe the different jobs being performed and decide which ones are representative of jobs or job characteristics in the community and offer variety in terms of work tasks, environments, demands, and employers. Second, talk over the identified job tasks with the employer, assess his or her receptivity to what has been chosen, and negotiate among all of the options presented. Third, observe the job being performed and write a task analysis for completing each duty while noting any other important aspects of the work area. Fourth, verify knowledge of the job, the employer's expectations, and the rules which employees of the company must follow by reviewing what is known with the employer, front line supervisor, lead co-worker or any other designated representative. Fifth, make the scheduling arrangements including who will participate, names of the trainers, method of transportation, hours of the assessment, what clothing must be worn, job duties to be performed, rules of the work area, and critical "tips" to remember. Sixth, inform the individual and any other persons who may be affected by the assessment, such as his or her family, teacher at school, residential staff, vocational trainer, day program personnel, or others. Don't leave anything to chance which could potentially jeopardize the present assessement and participants as well as the long-term arrangement with the employer. Seventh, communicate with the employer about conducting assessments over time based upon the number of persons to be served and the projected period in which job development activities are anticipated, such as every four or six months. Having everything prepared allows additional assessments to be conducted on a regular basis with just a telephone call to confirm with the employer and verify the previous arrangements that have been made.

Two issues frequently raised by agencies and employers concern liability and labor laws (Inge & Wehman, 1993). It is important to be well-versed in what these requirements are and the appropriate response to each of these questions. The U.S. Department of Labor has established specific criteria, which if followed, will not constitute an employment relationship in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. While there are numerous resources available which outline these criteria (Inge & Wehman, 1993) it is highly recommended that a contact be made with the Department of Labor for the information and any new guidelines which may affect your particular situation. Liability issues can be explained by describing the insurances that cover the customer and employment specialist and the responsibilities of all parties. For the employment specialist, her or his worker's compensation insurance covers him or her on the job site since that is part of the position's job description. The customer is covered by his or her private insurance or Medicaid/Medicare benefits. If it is a school situation and community-based training/assessments are included in the student's educational program then the school's liability insurance covers the student at the business. Finally, if accident or injury occurs due to negligence of the employer or circumstances beyond her or his control then the company's insurance would be liable as for the other employees, the public, or anyone else affected by the incident.

Community Assessment

Community assessments have been described earlier in this chapter. As previously mentioned, a community assessment provides an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the local area where the individual lives both to identify potential support resources and to determine job preferences. Additionally, it allows the employment specialist the chance to identify businesses to target for job development. For example, one person said he wanted a job with computers and office equipment and asked to see one business which was very formal in its appearance with employees dressed in a suit and tie and very little customer traffic. Another location was identified to allow him to see several similar types of businesses, however, this one was staffed by persons his own age, dressed casually, with trendy music playing in the background. After the first company, the individual thought he had chosen the wrong type of work and said he wanted to do something else; however after visiting the second business, he quickly changed his mind and eagerly pursued a job in an office supply store with similar features. For customers who have never worked or who have had limited experiences, making choices about a job or the features of a workplace often can be difficult. The community assessment opens up new and old environments to explore and observe thereby expanding the wealth of possibilities from which they will be making a selection.

The Situational Assessment Summary Form (Moon et al., 1990) located at the end of the chapter is a useful tool for recording observations and impressions noticed during the situational and community assessments. The form offers a listing of 30 characteristics found to be important when assisting someone with employment. Five spaces are provided beside each item to allow summaries of information from multiple observations and interviews. The "other" column is often used to summarize observations in another environment, community assessment activity, or additional interviews with key persons. The third situational assessment column can be modified to describe a community assessment or other activity if only two situational assessments are conducted. It is important to write down the functional behavior that is observed without adding interpretations of what is recorded. However, additional comments which explain the context or further clarify the information which may be useful for finding the right job are certainly encouraged. If multiple employment specialists are participating, the lead person should complete the form first and pass it on to the other(s) to add their comments or impressions.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

For some individuals, parents or a family member may not be involved in their life while others may have very close ties. It must be determined by the customer based upon his or her relationships with other persons as to who will be involved in the assessment process. What is important to consider is that in regards to going to work, the individual's entire life, including family members, must be an essential part since everyone in that family unit is likely to be affected. Families have their own lives, schedules, and priorities, and while going to work is a number one concern, the reality of day-to-day life and circumstances outside of work are major factors for them. Finding out their expectations, dreams, and life routines are a critical element that cannot be ignored. Often family members are viewed as not wanting their son or daughter to go to work and therefore, labeled as resistant and not supportive. The reality is that they may never have considered employment before because all their life they have been told that their son or daughter won't work. Perhaps, they are concerned about their family member being able to perform the job, fitting in with the other co-workers, the permanency of the position, transportation, loss of Medicaid/Medicare, or safety. It is important to remember that many of these family members may never have heard about supported employment or the employment specialist and are expressing concerns that are quite valid particularly under traditional vocational rehabilitation models. They may present a very different picture if once informed of the information which employment specialists have to share.

Be prepared to respond to family member concerns regardless of whether they are spoken or not. The truth of the matter is that parents may not know what to ask or may be interested but not want to jeopardize their daughter or son's chances of going to work or may feel they know the answer but have been misinformed in the past. It is important for you to share information in a way they can understand so that an informed choice can be made. Many of the issues are addressed by simply describing the job coaches' role and explaining what he or she is responsible for. For example, throughout the entire process, the ability to do the job, getting along with co-workers, safety, and responding to supervision can be alleviated by knowing what the employment specialist will be doing. Other issues, such as scheduling, hours, transportation, after work activities, alternative arrangements should the job not work out, and the responsibilities of the family, can be addressed during the assessment process by finding out what the family would like and the range of options that would be satisfactory for them. Finally, one of the greatest concerns, namely health insurance, should be discussed in depth with estimated calculations completed indicating the effect work would have on benefits, arranging and/or accompanying on a visit to Social Security and Medicaid/Medicare in order to accurately determine the impact of employment, and finding out their needs to be considered during job development (e.g., full or part time employment, company sponsored medical insurance).

Because the family is so important both in assisting the customer with employment as well as being a tremendous resource of support options that may be available, including them in the supported employment process and encouraging their involvement are crucial. Just as with the customer, take time to get to know the family by visiting them at home on several occasions. What the employment specialist is presenting to the family can be overwhelming not to mention that some very important decisions are being asked of them all of which cannot be expected to occur with just one meeting. Take time to build a relationship by sharing information, describing who the employment specialist and organization are, encouraging them to share their dreams, finding out their expectations, asking their opinions, and exploring the resources they rely on. If family members seem hesitant, slow down and give them time to think. Keep the channels of communication open by telephone and additional meetings to allow opportunities for questions and more detailed explanations. An excellent way to foster family support is to arrange linkages with other parents whose sons or daughters are working and can describe first-hand what their experiences were like and the benefits they encountered. Another suggestion is to conduct a parent resource night with written materials, slides and/or videos, speakers who are individuals and family members involved with supported employment, presentations by other agency representatives, and a period for questions and answers.

Develop a Customer Profile

One of the challenges of the assessment process is pulling together all of the information which has been obtained from the variety of sources. It is not uncommon for different information gathering techniques to yield differing information about the same thing. While this can be confusing, it is extremely helpful to be able to paint a larger picture of who the customer is and what her or his range of abilities, interests, and preferences really are. The key to making this information useful for the job development, job-site training, and long-term support services that follow is to synthesize the information in an easy reference format. In addition, extrapolating pertinent information and highlighting it in a functional resume offers a tool for employment specialists and customers to use for their job searches and career advancement efforts.

Synthesize Assessment Information

Once all of the assessment activities have been completed, the employment specialist should have a general sense of who the customer is, what kind of job he or she would like, and the types of supports that may be needed. Summarizing the information into the Customer Profile Form will help to make it more manageable when approaching a job and assisting the customer with making employment decisions. This form, located at the end of this chapter, contains 28 questions that have been found to be critical elements to consider from a customer and employer perspective. This form includes many of the same items that were previously thought about on the Situational Assessment Summary Form. The Customer Profile Form allows you to select one response for each item that best matches what the customer does under typical circumstances. If opposite extremes are witnessed under certain conditions, it is important to note them in the comment section but really does a disservice to everyone if indicated as the customer's primary way of doing something.

For example, a person who lifts 10 to 20 pounds regularly (item 1) while working at a job for three or four hours and during that time was observed lifting 50 pounds with a great deal of exertion on two separate instances, then selecting strong will give the impression that the individual can lift and carry 50 pounds or more throughout her or his work shift. However, checking fair, and writing in the comment section that the person is capable of lifting up to 50 pounds but not on a continuous basis opens up many more opportunities within jobs requiring strength without putting the customer in a situation that exceeds his or her physical abilities. Similarly, a very different picture is presented if under transportation (item 2) it is checked that the family would drive when, in reality, the family only will transport in an emergency or back-up situation.

A similar Job Screening Form described in the Job Development Chapter includes the same items focusing on the requirements of a job to assist with making training and support decisions essential for bridging the gap between the two. It is important to remember that this synopsis is completed to assist with finding a job that matches what the individual would like. Adding or eliminating bits of information in order to alter the impression of the individual as being more or less capable is not the purpose of the form. Since no judgements are being made and no one is at risk of being excluded as a result of the information obtained, the need to go beyond behaviorally describing the individual's skills and characteristics is not necessary and actually poses a disadvantage.

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Resumes are the means by which many people and employers get a job or hire their workers. Often, supported employment customers do not compete well on paper as represented on a job application or standard resume format. However, exploring the paid and unpaid work experiences and other work-related activities that the customer has been involved with and translating these into language an employer understands can significantly boost their advantage in the labor market. For example, special skills, talents, work behaviors, use of equipment, and exposure to different job duties can be presented in a way that lets the employer know the individual has had some vocational experience and offers many qualities to the business despite the fact that she or he may never have held a paid job before. A worksheet is attached for the customer and if desired, his or her family, to use, to brainstorm and remember activities and experiences that the person may have had but never considered to be relevant to becoming employed. It is a good idea to present this to them during an initial visit so they can begin thinking of information to include. Once the worksheet is completed, the employment specialist can word the information in a way that would be meaningful to an employer. An example of a completed functional resume is located in the Appendix of this chapter. This is useful to give to employers by the individual looking for a job, the employment specialist during job development, or by attaching it to an application or enclosing it with a cover letter and mailing or delivering them to an employer.

Putting it All Together

Michael is 25 years old and has cerebral palsy and mental retardation. He has limited use of his right hand, poor vision, and unclear speech. Michael attended a special education center and finished school three years ago. He participated in several work experiences while in school, some of which were paid. Michael worked in the school greenhouse for one year, in the school cafeteria for four months, and in the school library for two months. He obtained a competitive job in the garden center at a department store during his last year of school and was laid off after three weeks. Since Michael finished school, he has been sitting home watching television and video movies. He wants to work and thinks that janitorial work in an electronics store would be fun.

Vocational Evaluation Report

Michael was able to follow verbal, demonstrated, and pictorial directions. Instructions needed to be very specific and repeated each time the task was completed. Michael tried the following work samples: engine service, information processing, mail sorting, medical service, and assembly. He was observed to have a positive work attitude, perseverance, ability to work with others, acceptance of constructive criticism, an understanding of safety rules, adjustment to repetitive tasks, and care of equipment and materials. The following negative work behaviors were noted: slow work rate, poor accuracy, an inability to adapt to change, and a frustrated reaction to supervision. It is recommended that Michael receive work adjustment training with the goal of supported employment in the area of food service, office worker, or custodian.

Medical Report

Michael has spastic right hemiplegia resulting in flexion contractures of the right wrist, hip, and knee. The left arm and leg have fair muscle strength. He can walk independently. Michael cannot lift heavy objects, walk long distances, twist, stoop, or climb.

School Records

Michael gets along with everyone, is very polite, and usually goes along with whatever his teachers or peers say. He is an excellent worker, very motivated, and gets the work done. Michael learned how to do the greenhouse job and was able to work independently with minimal supervision and reinforcement after two months of intensive training. He likes to work alone and gets very frustrated if he cannot complete a task without assistance. He will try very hard to figure out a way to do something rather than ask someone for help. He did not perform as well in the kitchen or library jobs with frequent off-task behavior noted; however, even though he worked slowly, he persevered until the job was finished.

Home Visit

Michael and his mother were extremely excited and eager for him to start work. His mother was very supportive and offered to drive Michael or help in any way she could. She said Michael helped around the house with light cleaning and taking out the trash but only after repeated requests. Michael said he watched TV and taped movies on the VCR all day. He said he wanted to work and would do anything. Michael recently had knee surgery, but both he and his mother did not feel that he had any physical limitations that would interfere with work. Although, his mother did express concern that he would need frequent breaks to rest throughout his work day. His mother is very worried about Michael's inability to read or understand math. Michael says he wants to work and will do anything.

Situational Assessment

Michael participated in two situational assessments, one as a bagger at a grocery store and the other as a janitor in a department store. In both situations, Michael initiated working, insisting on doing the jobs his way even if it was incorrect; the employment specialist tried to show him the correct way to do the tasks. Michael was polite to the customers and greeted them appropriately. If a customer could not understand Michael and asked him to repeat what he said, Michael would throw down what he was working on and walk away. He filled bags in the grocery store and loaded them into cars with no physical difficulties. He worked for three hours in the grocery store before requesting a break to get a soda.

When Michael was dusting and vacuuming the men's and teens departments of the store, he asked to rest often, would stop working to look around, and kept asking what he should do next. Michael said he liked bagging groceries but liked being in the department store better. He said he just wants to work and get away from his mother.

Community Assessment

Michael eagerly went with the employment specialist initiating conversations about his neighborhood. He pointed out the video store where he walks to get movies, the restaurant that he and his family go to, and his friend's house where he likes to listen to music with. Michael sang and moved with the music on the car radio frequently requesting for it to be turned up. When asked what his favorite activity was, he quickly said listening to music and watching videos. The employment specialist drove to a mall where a video store, electronics store, and music store were all located. Michael darted to the music store and began pointing out and naming the different artists and types of music. After repeated coaxing, he visited the video store and again shared a great deal of movie trivia explaining the storyline and performers in many of the movies. Michael exhibited a tremendous degree of knowledge and enthusiasm when involved with music and videos that was not evident in any other settings. Michael said he would like to listen to music more at home but only had a radio and his mother "keeps playing the same old thing".

Based upon the above assessment information, a customer profile is developed to guide the entire supported employment process. A completed Customer Profile Form demonstrates how the varying information, representative of the entire person, can be summarized into a usable format to assist with finding a job that best matches what the individual would like to do and offers the job characteristics she or he is interested in.

SUMMARY

The importance of developing a customer profile cannot be overemphasized or ignored. Without this critical step, it is likely that the entire supported employment process will be affected. Specifically, job development activities must be driven by the customer's support needs and preferences. This can be accomplished by completing a comprehensive customer profile which includes person-centered planning, interviews, observations, review of the customer's records, community-based and situational assessments. In addition, the profile will be important during job-site training, since it specifies the customer's support needs, which will provide information for developing and implementing effective customer support plans.

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APPENDIX

- Functional Resume Worksheet
- Customer Profile for Michael
- Customer Profile Form
- Situational Assessment Form
- Individual Supports Assessment Form

Functional Resume Worksheet

Name: ______________________ Phone: ____________

Address: ____________________________________

I. Job Objective:

II. Education:

____
Degree/Program School

____
Location of School Month/Year

III. Skills:

Skill: ____
Accomplishments:

Skill: ____
Accomplishments:

IV. Experience (most recent)

____
Job Title Employer

____
City State Years Employed

____
Job Title Employer

____
City State Years Employed

V. Honors/Activities:

VI. References (available upon request)

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Customer Profile Form

[illegible]

5. **Wandering:**

___ [illegible] ___ [illegible] ___ [illegible] ___ Building only _✓_ Building & grounds

Specify if necessary: ______________________

6. **Physical mobility:**

___ [illegible] ___ [illegible] ___ [illegible] _✓_ Full physical abilities

Specify if necessary: [illegible]

7. **Independent in self-care - (ie grooming):**

_✓_ [illegible] ___ [illegible] ___ [illegible] ___ [illegible]

Specify if necessary: [illegible]

8. **Appearance:**

___ [illegible]
___ [illegible]
___ [illegible]
___ [illegible]

Specify if necessary: ______________________

9. **Communication:**

___ [illegible]
___ [illegible]
_✓_ Speaks normally
___ Communicates clearly, intelligibly in [illegible]

Specify if necessary: [illegible]

10. **Appropriate social interactions:**

___ [illegible]
___ [illegible]
___ Initiates social interaction infrequently
_✓_ Initiates social interaction frequently

Specify if necessary: ______________________

11. **Unusual behaviour:**

___ Many unusual behaviours ___ Few unusual behaviours _✓_ No unusual behaviours

Specify if necessary: ______________________

12. Attention to task/perseverance:

___ Frequent prompts required
___ Intermittent prompts/high supervision required
___ Intermittent prompts/low supervision required
_x_ Infrequent prompts/low supervision required

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

13. Independent sequencing of job duties:

___ Cannot perform tasks in sequence
_x_ Performs 2-3 tasks in sequence
___ Performs 4-6 tasks in sequence
___ Performs 7 or more tasks in sequence

Specifics/Comments: Situation dependent

14. Initiative/motivation:

___ Always seeks work _x_ Sometimes volunteers ___ Waits for directions ___ Avoids next task

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

15. Adapting to change:

___ Adapts to change
___ Adapts to change with some difficulty
_x_ Adapts to change with great difficulty
___ Rigid routine required

Specifics/Comments: Appears to accept criticism but becomes easily frustrated w/ continued supervisor comments.

16. Reinforced needs:

___ Frequent required
___ Intermittent (daily) sufficient
___ Infrequent (weekly sufficient)
_x_ Pay check sufficient

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

17. Family Support

_x_ Very supportive of work
___ Supportive of work with reservations
___ Indifferent about work
___ Negative about work

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

18. Customer's financial situation:

___ Financial ramifications no obstacle
___ Requires job with benefits
_x_ Reduction of financial aid is a concern
___ Unwilling to give up financial aid

Specifics/Comments: Receives SSI -- Mother concerned with potential loss of SSI.

19. Discrimination skills:

___ Cannot distinguish between work supplies
___ Distinguishes between work supplies with
an external cue
_x_ Distinguishes between work supplies

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

20. Time awareness:

___ Unaware of time and clock function
___ Identifies breaks and lunch
___ Can tell time to the hour
_x_ Can tell time in hours and minutes

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

21. Functional reading:

___ None ___ Sight words/symbols _x_ Simple reading ___ Fluent reading

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

22. Functional math:

___ None ___ Simple counting _x_ Simple addition/subtraction ___ Computation skills

Specifics/Comments: Can not make change, will use calculator, very limited math skills.

23. Independent street crossing:

___ None
_x_ Crosses 2 lane street with light
___ Crosses 2 lane street without light
___ Crosses 4 lane street with light
___ Crosses 4 lane street without light

Specifics/Comments: Slow speed, causes of great concern with mother.

24. Handling criticism/stress:

_x_ Resistive/argumentative
___ Withdraws into silence
___ Accepts criticism/does not change behavior
___ Accepts criticism/changes behavior

Specifics/Comments: Depends on situation, some inappropriate behavior observed.

25. Acts/speaks aggressively:

___ Hourly ___ Daily ___ Weekly _x_ Monthly ___ Never

Specifics/Comments: Can be very stubborn.

26. Travel skills: (check Yes or No for each item)

Requires bus training	_x_ Yes	___ No
Uses bus independently/no transfer	___ Yes	___ No
Uses bus independently/makes transfer	___ Yes	___ No
Able to make own travel arrangements	___ Yes	___ No

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

27. Benefits consumer needs: (check Yes or No for each choice)

0 =	None	___ Yes	_x_ No
1 =	Sick Leave	_x_ Yes	___ No
2 =	Medical/health benefits	___ Yes	_x_ No
3 =	Paid vacation/annual leave	_x_ Yes	___ No
4 =	Dental benefits	_x_ Yes	___ No
5 =	Employee discounts	_x_ Yes	___ No
6 =	Free or reduced meals	_x_ Yes	___ No
7 =	Other (specify): ______________________		

28. Check all that customer has performed:

_x_ Bus tables
___ Food prep
___ Buffing
_x_ Dusting
_x_ Stocking

_x_ Sweeping
___ Assembly
_x_ Vacuuming
_x_ Restroom cleaning
___ Washing equipment

_x_ Dish machine use
_x_ Mopping (indoor)
___ Food line supply
_x_ Trash disposal
___ Food serving

_x_ Keeping busy
_x_ Clerical
_x_ Pot scrubbing
___ Other (specify):
____
____

Medications? None

Medical Complications/Conditions? Eye therapy

____

Additional Comments: ______________________________

____

____

____

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Customer Profile Form

Customer Name: ______________________ **Social Security #:** ______________

Staff Completing Form: ______________________ **I.D. Code:** ______________

Date of Screening (month/day/year): _____/_____/_____

Types of Screening: Initial ___ Ongoing Employment ___ Ongoing Unemployment ___

Total number of hours per week presently working: ________ **Months per year:** ________

General Directions: ***PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEM UNANSWERED***

Indicate the most appropriate response for each item based on observations of the customer and interviews with individual who know the customer (i.e., family members, adult service providers, school personnel, employers).

1. **Availability: (check Yes or No for each item)**

Will work weekends: ___ Yes ___ No
Will work evenings: ___ Yes ___ No
Will work part-time: ___ Yes ___ No
Will work full-time: ___ Yes ___ No

Specific Comments: ______________________________

2. **Transportation: (check Yes or No for each item)**

Transportation available: ___ Yes ___ No
Access to specialized travel services: ___ Yes ___ No
Lives on bus route: ___ Yes ___ No
Family will transport: ___ Yes ___ No
Provides own transportation (bike or walks): ___ Yes ___ No

Specific Comments: ______________________________

3. **Strength — Lifting and Carrying:**

___ *Poor (< 10 lbs)* ___ Fair (10-20 lbs) ___ Average (20-40 lbs) ___ Strong (> 50 lbs)

Specific Comments: ______________________________

4. **Endurance: (without breaks)**

___ Works < 2 hours ___ Works 2-3 hours ___ Works 3-4 hours ___ Works > 4 hours

Specific Comments: ______________________________

5. **Orienting:**

___Small area only ___One room ___Several rooms ___Building wide ___Building & ground

Specific/Comments: ____________________

6. **Physical mobility:**

___Restricted to one area ___Fair ambulation ___Negotiates obstacles ___Full physical abilities

Specific/Comments: ____________________

7. **Independent work rate: (no prompts)**

___Slow pace ___Steady average pace ___Above average sometimes fast pace ___Continual fast pace

Specific/Comments: ____________________

8. **Appearance:**

___ Unkempt poor hygiene
___ Unkempt clean
___ Neat clean but clothing unmatched
___ Neat clean and clothing matched

Specific/Comments: ____________________

9. **Communication:**

___ Uses sounds/gestures
___ Unkempt clean
___ Speaks unclearly
___ Communicates clearly, intelligible to strangers

Specific/Comments: ____________________

10. **Appropriate social interactions:**

___ Rarely interacts appropriately
___ Polite, responses appropriate
___ Initiates social interactions infrequently
___ Initiates social interactions frequently

Specific/Comments: ____________________

11. **Unusual behavior:**

___ Many unusual behaviors ___ Few unusual behaviors ___ No unusual behaviors

Specific/Comments: ____________________

12. Attention to task/perseverance:

___ Frequent prompts required
___ Intermittent prompts/high supervision required
___ Intermittent prompts/low supervision required
___ Infrequent prompts/low supervision required

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

13. Independent sequencing of job duties:

___ Cannot perform tasks in sequence
___ Performs 2-3 tasks in sequence
___ Performs 4-6 tasks in sequence
___ Performs 7 or more tasks in sequence

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

14. Initiative/motivation:

___ Always seeks work ___ Sometimes volunteers ___ Waits for directions ___ Avoids next task

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

15. Adapting to change:

___ Adapts to change
___ Adapts to change with some difficulty
___ Adapts to change with great difficulty
___ Rigid routine required

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

16. Reinforcement needs:

___ Frequent required
___ Intermittent (daily) sufficient
___ Infrequent (weekly) sufficient
___ Pay check sufficient

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

17. Family Support

___ Very supportive of work
___ Supportive of work with reservations
___ Indifferent about work
___ Negative about work

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

18. Consumer's financial situation:

___ Financial ramifications no obstacle
___ Requires job with benefits
___ Reduction of financial aid a concern
___ Unwilling to give up financial aid

Specific/Comments: ______________________________

19. Discrimination skills:

___ Cannot distinguish between work supplies
___ Distinguishes between work supplies with an external cue
___ Distinguishes between work supplies

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

20. Time awareness:

___ Unaware of time and clock function
___ Identifies breaks and lunch
___ Can tell time to the hour
___ Can tell time in hours and minutes

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

21. Functional reading:

___ None
___ Sight words/symbols
___ Simple reading
___ Fluent reading

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

22. Functional math:

___ None
___ Simple counting
___ Simple addition/subtraction
___ Computation skills

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

23. Independent street crossing:

___ None
___ Crosses 2-lane street with light
___ Crosses 2-lane street without light
___ Crosses 4-lane street with light
___ Crosses 4-lane street without light

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

24. Handling criticism/stress:

___ Becomes argumentative
___ Withdraws into silence
___ Accepts criticism/does not change behavior
___ Accepts criticism/changes behavior

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

25. Interrupts appropriately:

___ Hourly
___ Daily
___ Weekly
___ Monthly
___ Never

Specifics/Comments: ____________________

26. Travel skills (check Yes or No for each item)

Requires bus training	___ Yes	___ No
Uses bus independently to transfer	___ Yes	___ No
Uses bus independently makes transfer	___ Yes	___ No
Able to make own travel arrangements	___ Yes	___ No

Specifically comments: ____________________

27. Benefits consumer needs (check Yes or No for each choice)

0	=	None	___ Yes	___ No
1	=	Sick Leave	___ Yes	___ No
2	=	Medical/health benefits	___ Yes	___ No
3	=	Paid vacation/annual leave	___ Yes	___ No
4	=	Dental benefits	___ Yes	___ No
5	=	Employee discounts	___ Yes	___ No
6	=	Free or reduced meals	___ Yes	___ No
7	=	Other (specify) ____________________		

28. Check all that consumer has performed:

___ Bus tables
___ Cook prep
___ Buffing
___ Dusting
___ Washing
___ Sweeping
___ Assembly
___ Vacuuming
___ Restroom cleaning
___ Washing equipment
___ Dish machine use
___ Shopping indoors
___ Food line supply
___ Trash disposal
___ Food serving
___ Stocking shelves
___ Clerical
___ Pot scrubbing
___ Other (specify)
____
____

Medications? ____________________

Medical complications/conditions? ____________________

____

Additional comments: ____________________

____

____

____

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Situational Assessment

Customer: ______________________ **Person Completing Form:** ______________________ **Date:** ______________

Directions: Indicate the response for each item in the appropriate category based on information gathered from the customer's parent, teacher, and observations during the situational assessments. For each item describe the behavior, characteristics, or activity. When applicable, include the frequency of its occurrence and the environment where it occurs (antecedent, consequence, location, people).

[illegible]	Situational Assessment I	Situational Assessment II	Situational Assessment III	[illegible]	[illegible]
Strength – Lifting and Carrying ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible]					
Endurance ● Works [illegible] ● Works [illegible] ● Works [illegible] ● Works [illegible]					
[illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible]					
Physical Mobility ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible] ● [illegible]					

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					
[illegible]					

Items Located on the Customer Employment Screening Form	Situational Assessment I	Situational Assessment II	Situational Assessment III	Other	Parent or Guardian
Discrimination Skills • Cannot distinguish between work supplies • Distinguishes between work supplies with an external cue • Distinguishes between work supplies					
Time Awareness • Unaware of time and clock function • Identifies breaks/lunch • Can tell time to the hour • Can tell time in hours/minutes					
Functional Reading • None • Sight words/symbols • Simple reading • Fluent reading					
Functional Math • None • Simple counting • Simple addition/subtraction • Computational skills					
Independent Street Crossing • None • 2-lane street (with or w/o light) • 4-lane street (with or w/o light)					
Handling Criticism/Stress • Resistive/argumentative • Withdraws into silence • Accepts criticism/does not change					

(Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990)

ITEMS LOCATED ON THE CUSTOMER EMPLOYMENT SCREENING FORM	**SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT I**	**SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT II**	**SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT III**	**OTHER**	**PARENT OR GUARDIAN**
Acts/Speaks Aggressively ■ Hourly ■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly ■ Never					
Travel Skills ■ Requires bus training ■ Uses bus independently (with or w/o transfers) ■ Able to make own travel arrangements					
Work Experience ■ Employment site ■ Job tasks performed ■ Dates, hours, wages					
Physical Limitations ■ Impairment ■ Medications ■ Medical restrictions					
Responding to Survival Words ■ Street signs ■ Restrooms ■ Danger, stop					
Hurtful to Self/Others ■ Banging head, pulling hair ■ Biting, scratching ■ Hitting, pinching					
Destructive to Property ■ breaks, burns, tears things					

(Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990)

Items Located on the Customer Employment Screening Form	Situational Assessment I	Situational Assessment II	Situational Assessment III	Other	Parent or Guardian
Disruptive Behavior that Interferes with Activities of Others ▪ Yelling, screaming ▪ Clinging ▪ Laughing/crying for no reason ▪ Interrupting					
Usual or Repetitive Behavior/habits ▪ Pacing ▪ Rocking ▪ Twirling fingers ▪ Twitching					
Behavior that is Socially Offensive to Others ▪ Talking too loud ▪ Burping, picking nose ▪ touching, hugging					
Withdrawal or Inattentive Behavior ▪ Keeping away from people ▪ Expresses unusual fears ▪ Shows little interest in activities					
Uncooperative or Noncompliant Behavior ▪ Refusing to attend school/work ▪ Refusing to follow rules/requests ▪ Acting defiant/pouting					
Leisure Skills/Interests					
Chores or Responsibilities					

(Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990)

ITEMS LOCATED ON THE CUSTOMER EMPLOYMENT SCREENING FORM	SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT I	SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT II	SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT III	OTHER	PARENT OR GUARDIAN
Activities, Foods, and Items that are Reinforcing					
Money Skills ■ Discriminates between coins ■ Makes minor purchases ■ Makes major purchases ■ Amount of spending ■ Money given to customer ■ Willingness of family to give customer money from paycheck					
Asking for Assistance ■ Peers ■ Co-workers ■ Acquaintances ■ Persons in authority					
Other:					

From: Moon, M.S., Inge, K.J., Wehman, P., Brooke, V., & Barcus, M. (1990). Helping persons with severe disabilities get and keep employment: Supported employment issues and outcomes. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

(Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, & Barcus, 1990)

Individual Supports Assessment Form

Date: ____________ **Provider ID:** ______________________________

Customer Name: ______________________________ **SS#:** ____________________

Employment Specialist: ______________________________ **ID Code:** ____________________

Street: ______________________________ **Initial:** ____________________

City/State/Zip: ______________________________ **On-Going:** ____________________

Please answer each question regarding the customer's current goals, preferences, and experiences. Information needed to respond to each question should be obtained from the customer during a face-to-face interview prior to employment or while working if a change in employment is desired.

I. Vocational Goals and Experience

1. **What are your career and life goals?** (Describe the job or position you would like to have and any other goals you would like to pursue, e.g., school, independent living, etc.)

2. **Where might you like to work?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) restaurant
_____ 2) grocery store
_____ 3) retail store
_____ 4) hospital/nursing home
_____ 5) office building
_____ 6) hotel/motel
_____ 7) university/school
_____ 8) day care facility
_____ 9) factory
_____ 10) service provider/agency (e.g., church, park)
_____ 11) don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

3. a. **What type of job might you like to have?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) dishwasher/kitchen utility worker
_____ 2) food prep person
_____ 3) food server
_____ 4) bus person/lobby attendant
_____ 5) janitor/housekeeper
_____ 6) laborer
_____ 7) assembler
_____ 8) laundry worker
_____ 9) stock clerk/bagger/warehouse worker
_____ 10) machine operator
_____ 11) clerical/office worker
_____ 12) groundskeeper/landscaper
_____ 13) human service worker
_____ 14) don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ____)

b. **Is there anyone you know who works in the places or in a position that you might like to have that you wouldn't mind us contacting?**

Name	Relationship	Phone #	Employment

4. **What types of things might be important to you in working in the position of your choice?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) hours
_____ 2) benefits (e.g., paid vacations, sick leave, employee discount)
_____ 3) health insurance
_____ 4) wages
_____ 5) location of business
_____ 6) co-workers
_____ 7) work environment
_____ 8) nothing/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ____)

5. **Have you ever been employed in a paid job before?**

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

If yes, **a) where did you work?**

1) ______________________________
2) ______________________________
3) ______________________________

b) what was your job title?

1) ______________________________
2) ______________________________
3) ______________________________

6. **Have you participated in any other work experiences (e.g., volunteer work, vocational training, etc.)?**

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

If yes, describe the work that you did. ______________________________

____

____

7. **Who might you like to assist you in finding a job?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) parents
_____ 2) brother/sister
_____ 3) relatives
_____ 4) girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse
_____ 5) friends
_____ 6) community member (Describe: ______________________________)
_____ 7) professional (Describe: ______________________________)
_____ 8) no one/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

8. **In what ways would you be willing to help with finding a job?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) identifying job leads
_____ 2) looking at the newspaper
_____ 3) contacting employers
_____ 4) picking up job applications
_____ 5) developing a resume
_____ 6) none/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

9. **What means of transportation would you be willing to use in order to go to and from work?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) drive self
_____ 2) friend or family member transport
_____ 3) walk
_____ 4) ride a bicycle
_____ 5) ride the bus

_____ 6) use a taxi
_____ 7) carpool
_____ 8) ride with co-workers
_____ 9) use specialized transportation
_____ 10) none/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________

II. Interests

10. What do you do during your free time?

_____ 1) watch television
_____ 2) shop/go to the mall
_____ 3) participate in organized recreational or sporting activities
_____ 4) go to sporting events
_____ 5) go bowling
_____ 6) roller skate/ice skate
_____ 7) read books or magazines
_____ 8) go to movies
_____ 9) listen to music
_____ 10) go to concerts
_____ 11) hang out with friends
_____ 12) go dancing
_____ 13) talk on the telephone
_____ 14) hobbies
_____ 15) arts and crafts
_____ 16) nothing
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

11. Are there other things you would like to do during your free time?

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

If yes, what kinds of things would you like to do? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) watch television
_____ 2) shop/go to the mall
_____ 3) participate in organized recreational or sporting activities
_____ 4) go to sporting events
_____ 5) go bowling
_____ 6) roller skate/ice skate
_____ 7) read books or magazines
_____ 8) go to movies
_____ 9) listen to music
_____ 10) go to concerts
_____ 11) hang out with friends

_____ 12) go dancing
_____ 13) talk on the telephone
_____ 14) hobbies
_____ 15) arts and crafts
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

12. Who do you usually spend your free time with? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) friends
_____ 2) girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse
_____ 3) parents
_____ 4) brothers/sisters
_____ 5) relatives
_____ 6) neighbors
_____ 7) peers (e.g., students, workshop participants)
_____ 8) general public
_____ 9) no one
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

13. Do you participate in any clubs or organizations? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) 4-H clubs
_____ 2) church/synagogue
_____ 3) health/fitness club
_____ 4) hobby clubs (e.g., card or stamp collecting, bingo, etc.)
_____ 5) community recreational programs
_____ 6) sports teams
_____ 7) school clubs/groups
_____ 8) YMCA/YWCA
_____ 9) civic organizations (Describe: ______________________________)
_____ 10) special interest groups (Describe: ______________________________)
_____ 11) none/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

14. Are there any clubs or organizations you would like to belong to or participate in?

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

If yes, what clubs or organizations would you like to become involved with?

_____ 1) 4-H clubs
_____ 2) church/synagogue
_____ 3) health/fitness club
_____ 4) hobby clubs (e.g., card or stamp collecting, bingo, etc.)
_____ 5) community recreational programs
_____ 6) sports teams
_____ 7) school clubs/groups
_____ 8) YMCA/YWCA

_____ 9) civic organizations (Describe: ____________________________________)
_____ 10) special interest groups (Describe: ______________________________)
_____ 99) other (Describe: ____)

15. a. **Does a family member or friend belong to or participate in any of the following clubs or organizations?** (check all that apply)

_____ 1) American Association of Retired Citizens
_____ 2) American Red Cross
_____ 3) Big Brothers/Big Sisters
_____ 4) Chamber of Commerce
_____ 5) church/synagogue
_____ 6) Civitans
_____ 7) community or neighborhood association
_____ 8) Cooperative Extension Service
_____ 9) Elks Club
_____ 10) hobby clubs
_____ 11) Jaycees
_____ 12) Junior League
_____ 13) Junior Women's Club
_____ 14) Kiwanas
_____ 15) Knights of Columbus
_____ 16) Lions
_____ 17) Masonic Temple
_____ 18) Mocha Temple
_____ 19) Moose Club
_____ 20) recreation and park department
_____ 21) Shriners
_____ 22) sport team (Describe: ____________________________________)
_____ 23) special interest group (Describe: ____________________________)
_____ 24) union (e.g., Teamsters, AFL-CIO)
_____ 25) United Way (continued)
_____ 26) volunteer work (Describe: ________________________________)
_____ 27) YMCA/YWCA
_____ 28) none/don't know
_____ 99) other (Describe: ____)

b. **Are there any individuals who belong to the above clubs or organizations that you wouldn't mind us contacting?**

Name	Relationship	Phone #	Organization

III. Potential Support Options/Support Needs

16. Who do you live with? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) no one
_____ 2) parents
_____ 3) girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse
_____ 4) brothers/sisters
_____ 5) relatives
_____ 6) friends
_____ 7) roommates
_____ 8) personal assistant
_____ 9) professionals/paid staff
_____ 10) residents
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

17. Who usually assists you when you need something or have a problem? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) parent/guardian
_____ 2) brothers/sisters
_____ 3) girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse
_____ 4) relatives
_____ 5) friends
_____ 6) community members
_____ 7) neighbors
_____ 8) teacher
_____ 9) rehabilitation counselor
_____ 10) case manager
_____ 11) no one
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

18. When you want to go somewhere, how do you usually get there? (check all that apply)

_____ 1) drive
_____ 2) friend or family member transports
_____ 3) walk
_____ 4) ride a bicycle
_____ 5) ride the bus
_____ 6) use a taxi
_____ 7) use specialized transportation
_____ 99) other (Describe: ______________________________)

19. a) Do you receive Social Security benefits (e.g., SSI, SSDI)?

_____ 1) yes   _____ 2) no

b) If yes, is the potential loss of Social Security benefits due to future employment a concern?

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

20. a) Are there any types of services or supports that you would like or are in need of and are not receiving?

_____ 1) yes _____ 2) no

b) If yes, identify the type of assistance you would like.

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4

Job Development: The Path to Careers

The shift between organizational marketing and job development will be relatively seamless, in the supported employment organization that incorporates organizational marketing as a significant function of their service delivery practices. Quality supported employment services will include planning as a critical and on-going activity. The planning function of organizational marketing, as well as job development ensures that all employment related services are driven by the specific interests and needs of: 1) job seekers with significant disabilities; and 2) community employers. Yet, because individual interests and needs are never stagnant, the results of the planning process will constantly be evolving and continually individualized. If supported employment personnel are actively engaged in cultivating a strong open relationship between themselves and individuals with significant disabilities and community employers, both individual and group needs will be communicated back to the organization. When implemented correctly this process will allow supported employment organizations to always be in a position to deliver needed services in a timely manner.

As presented in chapter 2, market-based planning provides supported employment personnel engaged in job development activities with critical information, to influence and shape the overall service provisions of the organization. Conducting business in this manner will ultimately build a strong organization and a solid community reputation. Target areas for information gathering includes the items listed in the table below.

MARKET-BASED PLANNING & INFORMATION GATHERING AREAS

- Interests and Needs of People with Significant Disabilities
- Interests and Needs of Community Employers
- Labor Market Information (i.e. status of business growth and decline)
- Economic Trends (i.e. unemployment rate, current and projected)
- Political & Social Influences Affecting Supported Employment Services (i.e. community perception of inclusion, compliance with ADA, and/or other disability related legislation.)
- Demographic Data (who lives in the community and in what locations).

The employment specialist will engage in a wide variety of activities associated with job development. At first glance many of these activities will not appear to be directly assisting a supported employment job seeker in obtaining a job. A common mistake among many employment specialists is to expect that all job development activities will lead to a specific job. While this is the ultimate goal of job development it may not always be achieved. Rather, job development dovetails with marketing and as such, entails developing long term, mutually profitable, and valuable relationships. Consequently, every interaction is a building block of this relationship and must be understood as such. If an employment specialist understands the objectives behind each of the activities associated with job development, then the job-hunt process will become rewarding for all of the parties involved.

For example, the supported employment job development objective for mailing an organizational letter of introduction to a community business is to successfully gain access to an employer with the identified business. Therefore, when an introductory letter assists supported employment personnel in securing a business appointment, this job development activity should be considered a success; even if a supported employment customer never gets a job at the particular place of business. Gaining access to the employer was a successful job-hunt activity because the employment specialist was able to meet with the employer, gain important information about the business, and obtain specific details regarding personnel hiring issues within the corporation. It will be important for employment specialists and customers to acknowledge the accomplishment of all successful objectives. These accomplishments will then be evaluated along with issues and concerns in the job development process.

DIRECTING THE JOB-HUNT

Supported employment customers will choose to lead, direct , actively participate, or simply stay informed during the job development or job-hunt process. The key to providing a customer-driven approach is to work with supported employment customers to assist them in determining their role, duties, and responsibilities. Job seekers should be encouraged and supported to exert control over their own job development process. Therefore, the employment specialist is always working from a least to most intrusive approach and is careful not to provide more assistance than the job seeker needs to be successful in obtaining employment. **It stands to reason that customers who have been very active in obtaining the job of their choice will have a greater sense of success and a stronger commitment to the business and to their employer.**

There are a variety of different ways for a customer to participate in the job development process to include: creating a resume, telephoning the employment specialist with job leads, cold calling employers, and networking with family and friends. Regardless of how the customer shapes his or her role, the employment specialist would continue to be available and to provide direct support or assistance. The partnership that is ultimately developed between the customer and the employment specialist will require supported employment personnel to develop a strong working knowledge of the interests, abilities, and experiences of all job seekers. The following table presents various avenues for increasing customer involvement in the job development process. It is important to remember that most customers will choose to use a combination of the techniques presented here.

TECHNIQUES FOR INCREASING CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT IN JOB DEVELOPMENT

- Develop an Employment Resume
- Contact the Employment Specialist with Job Leads
- Ask Family Members About Job Openings
- Ask Friends About Job Openings
- Cold Calling Employers

KNOWING THE JOB SEEKER

Before job-hunting can begin for a specific individual, it is imperative for the employment specialist to gain first hand knowledge about the individual and to establish an effective and comfortable level of communication. Creating the opportunity to get to know a supported employment customer is sometimes difficult. For this reason it is often overlooked as a step in the job development process. Yet, it will be through this process that the employment specialist will be able to become familiar with an individual's positive characteristics, preferences, potential needs, and significant family and community supports. In addition, the accomplishment of this step will help to define the roles and responsibilities for the customer and the employment specialist during job development.

Taking time to really get to know an individual will enable the employment specialist to rely upon recent, first hand knowledge that has been obtained through direct conversations and observations. Typically, the majority of this information will be obtained during the customer profile component, as described in Chapter 3 of the handbook. Yet, many supported employment customers and employment specialists will want to spend some additional time getting to know each other for role clarification. There are many creative ways to accomplish this objective and to collect the information desired. Several techniques can easily be incorporated into the employment specialist's routine activities during job development to include: schedule a home visit, plan an information sharing meeting, invite the job seeker to accompany the employment specialist during a community analysis and labor market screening (encourage the individual to direct this activity by visiting those community businesses that are of personal interest to the job seeker), encourage the job seeker to participate in several job analysis activities that appear interesting or are in an area that is totally unfamiliar, and ensure regular and consistent contact once job development has begun. The table below provides a list of job development activities that the job seeker and the employment specialist can perform together in an effort to gain information and to establish a rapport.

TECHNIQUES FOR ESTABLISHING RAPPORT WITH THE JOB SEEKER

- Home Visit
- Information Sharing Meeting
- Community Job Market Screening Activities
- Structured Business Site Visits Directed by the Job Seeker's Personal Interests
- Employment Site Visits in Occupational Areas that are Unfamiliar to the Job Seeker
- Job Analysis Activities
- Regular Job Development Communication Updates

Communication Method

The employment specialist will want to learn as much about the individual as possible and identify an effective communication system. Verbal communication is not always the most effective or reliable form of transferring information for many individuals, and for some individuals it may be non-existent. Once the employment specialist is able to effectively communicate with the individual the benefit will be two-fold. First, effective communication will enable the employment specialist to gather important interest and preference information from the customer to guide the job development process. Secondly, once the employment specialist and the customer establish a strong communication system, together they will be able to demonstrate this method, through routine interactions and thereby educate the employer, co-workers, and others. Often times this type of informal education and/or demonstration can be extremely effective in assisting an employer to feel comfortable and reduce her or his concerns about future employee communication issues.

Assertive Communication

Establishing a comfortable and open form of communication is equally important. If the supported employment job seeker does not feel comfortable with the employment specialist, he or she is not likely to share ideas or feelings that later could be critical in selecting an employment position. For example, "I don't want that type of work"; "I hate the color red"; or "I'm afraid of going outside after dark". Knowing the individual will enhance the employment specialist's ability to determine when the person is open and expressing her or his real feelings or merely acting polite. While establishing rapport and communication, the pertinent information to gather should include but not be limited to: the individual's likes and dislikes; preferences; physical and cognitive abilities; learning styles; environmental responses; social and recreational participation; independent living skills;

transportation; money skills; and time recognition. There are several documents that address these preferences, interests, and skills, and can be found in Chapter 3 of the handbook.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

There is a duplicate function that crosses the activities that are associated with organizational marketing and job development. This duplicate function is known as developing corporate relationships and business linkages for building strong future business partnerships. Typically, most supported employment programs do not engage in this activity. Yet, if relationships are carefully built then partnerships will be developed with the business community. This approach can make the difference between success and failure in the job development process. Generally, the mistake that many employment specialists make during job development is to focus exclusively on contacting employers for the sole purpose of obtaining a job. Although the ultimate goal is to assist persons with significant disabilities in obtaining employment and building careers, solely pursuing jobs is shortsighted.

Employment specialists who are successful and enjoy the job development process have built solid and trusting relationships with the business community. Employment specialists, as well as individuals with significant disabilities who spend time conducting informational interviews will be rewarded with a rich pool of businesses who are interested in the services offered by the supported employment organization. These companies will know that the supported employment organization understands their business and is interested in establishing a mutually satisfying relationship.

Using the data from an extensive labor market analysis will form the building blocks for creating these important relationships. The employment specialist must analyze the information that was gained during organizational marketing to identify businesses in the community, especially those that have jobs and careers that match the job interests and abilities of the organization's customers. Armed with this information, the employment specialist is able to target specific employers and to begin job development. The remaining portion of this chapter will present information on tools of the trade, business etiquette, creating a business profile, making a business contact, sales techniques, and job restructuring or job carving.

PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

As discussed in chapter two of this manual, the extent and type of promotion used by an organization is generated from organizational marketing. Before an employment specialist and/or customer engages in the job development or the job search process, he or she should have a packet of information that looks professional and serves a specific set of objectives. As supported employment organizations begin to develop important tools for job development, customers should participate in the lay-out and design of all promotional instruments. These tools are described below and include the items found in the following table.

PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

- Letters of Introduction
- Advertising Flyers
- Business Cards

Letters of Introduction

A letter of introduction is a personal letter on the organization's employment services letterhead. This letter is written to introduce both the organization and the employment specialist. The purpose of the letter is to help the employer to build an association between the name of an organization and the available service. The letter of introduction is then followed by a phone call requesting a personal interview.

Sample Letter:

Are you in the market for competent, hard working employees? Employment Services Inc. specializes in finding the right person for the right job. The enclosed brochure (or fact sheet) describes the features of our business. Over 50 employers in this community have used our service. We are very interested in adding Ford Motor Company to our list of satisfied customers. I will be calling you next week to set up an appointment.

Sample Follow-up Telephone Call:

"Hello, my name is Jane Adams with Employment Services Inc. I'm calling to follow up on the letter I sent you last week. As I mentioned, Employment Services Inc. is an employment services agency that specializes in a variety of jobs. I'd like to meet with you Thurs-day or Friday of next week to discuss your personnel needs. I expect we'll need no more than 25 minutes. Is this convenient for you?"

Advertising Flyers

A well designed flyer is written to target specific businesses. Organizations can develop a variety of flyers specifically designed to meet the targeted needs of a community business. Using data from the community labor market screening, specific targets can be set. For example, if your community has several businesses that develop software, then this group of employers would be targeted. A flyer would then be developed that advertises how the specific labor needs of the business can be addressed through the supported employment organization. In the software industry, for example, the supported employment organization would include such occupations as solderers and packagers.

Brochures

In addition, to working with supported employment customers in designing job development tools, employment specialists should also work with employers. Community employers can provide a great deal of assistance in designing and printing attractive business brochures. These brochures should be filled with photos and visual images, with limited but effective use of printed information. It is important to remember that most employers receive a lot of mail. A brochure that is colorful, attractive, and that clearly describes the organization's employment services will stand out from other promotional materials. Attempting to design an all purpose brochure that combines, for example, children's programs, residential services, sheltered work, and competitive employment will not be effective or cost efficient. This type of brochure does not provide the employer with a clear understanding of the mission or purpose of supported employment services.

Business Cards

Business cards should be professionally printed with the name of the employment specialist and the organization in a prominent position using a type or font style that is easily deciphered. If a title is used on the business card, it should correspond to common business language, rather than social service terminology. For example, Mark Edward's official title is Case Manager. Mark should choose to either not include his title on his business card or make his title specific to employment, such as Job Developer or Employment Specialist. This will help to reinforce that the purpose of the supported employment organization is employment services.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

The initial interview with an employer should be structured to obtain key pieces of information about the company an, if applicable the specific job opening. This process is referred to as informational interviewing. During this type of interview the employment specialist and/or supported employment customer will want to obtain some fundamental information about the business. Important areas for information gathering will evolve around four major areas. One, the employment specialist will want to confirm some basic information related to the business to include: the complete corporate name and address, the approximate size of the business, the type of products and/or services that are available through the company, and the name of the company contact person. Another major area for information gathering is related to the company's personnel needs, practices, and experience. The employment specialist will want to ascertain information related to the company's hiring practice, length of time required for the hiring process, experience with job accommodations, projected hiring needs, and types of services that will be required from an employment service business. A third area for information gathering is to gain additional information about the company. Asking questions related to the company's products and services, as well as production and quality needs will assist in providing an improved picture of the overall business. Finally, the fourth area involves gaining information about any additional employment related service desires that the company currently has or may experience in the future. The following table summarizes the important areas for information gathering during the informational interview.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

1) Name of Business
2) Business Address
3) Size of Business
4) Business Products
5) Business Services
6) Contact Person
7) Hiring Process
8) Projected Hiring Needs
9) Experiences with Job Accommodations
10) Experience Hiring Employees with Disabilities
11) Services Required from an Employment Services Business
12) Employment Related Services Desires

Business Interviewing

Conducting an informational interview at a community business will have several important purposes. The primary purpose of informational interviewing is to give the employment specialist an opportunity to build rapport with the employer without immediately wanting something in return, such as a job. The quality and quantity of the information that is obtained during this process will determine a successful outcome. The employment specialist and/or the job seeker who can obtain a great deal of specific information about a business will be in an excellent position to guide the employment selection process by matching job seeker interests and experiences with an employment position. Some employment specialists use the interview process to make sure that they are working with the business representative who has hiring power. This may take several phone calls and interviews, but in the long-run this time intensive activity will pay off when the employment specialist is able to directly target job development activities toward the individual who is responsible for hiring.

A business interview should take no more than 30 minutes of the employer's time. It is important for the employment specialist to realize that **time** is an important factor for the business community and the intent of the visit is to conduct an **interview**. Therefore, the best way for the employment specialist to gain information about an employer's personnel needs will be to ask questions. Much of the initial interview time will be spent engaged in informal conversation to become comfortable with one another and to give a sense that the two organizations can do business.

Business Interview Case Study

Geri Temple is a new employment specialist. Part of her on-the-job training at Advantage Employment Services is to spend two weeks conducting informational interviews with different employers throughout her community. She worked with Joe Smith, Advantage's Marketing Representative, to identify several employers. Today she is visiting Harriman's Hallmark Showcase Card and Gift Shop. She wrote the manager, Jill Phelps, a letter introducing herself and her business last week. A brief phone call with Ms. Phelps established a convenient time for the informational interview.

Prior to the visit Geri developed several questions to ask Ms. Phelps. Realizing that she wanted to get a lot of information in a short period of time, Geri was concerned about using her time wisely. Because she understood that probing questions would encourage discussion, her questions began with one of the following words: who, what, where, when, why and how. Sample questions developed for her interview meeting with Ms. Phelps are provided below.

1. What types of job duties are performed at this shop?
2. When are your busy seasons and how long do they last?
3. How do you usually recruit employees?
4. What has been your experience with these recruitment sources?
5. What are your performance expectations?
6. What services do you expect from employment service businesses?

Upon entering the card and gift shop, Geri was eager to immediately make Ms. Phelps feel comfortable during the interview. She initiated the meeting by remarking on the attractive nature of the Hallmark Showcase and the store's wonderful selection of cards and gifts. Small talk, similar to what Geri was doing with Ms. Phelps, is important because it encourages conversation by both parties and begins to establish a friendly rapport.

Once rapport is established, Geri can shift her focus to gathering specific job-related information. "Now Ms. Phelps, we at Advantage Employment Services are interested in learning more about your personnel needs. Should we do business together, it is important for us to know what you expect from your employees. Let's start with the different types of job duties that are performed." During the conversation, Geri is careful to watch Ms. Phelps' facial expressions and body movement to determine if Ms. Phelps appears distracted or rushed. It will be important for employment specialists to become skilled at discerning body language and facial expressions. Ascertaining cues of this nature will make it apparent if for example, the employment specialist has arrived at an inconvenient time for an interview. In this situation, the employment specialist will be able to suggest returning at another time.

As part of the interview, Geri requested a short tour of the shop. During the tour, Geri had the opportunity to ask specific questions about job tasks and shop operations. In addition, Geri was able to observe employee interactions and begin assessing the social and cultural aspects of the gift shop. Observing and asking questions regarding co-worker relationships and management style, as well as determining employees with influence, can provide clues to the amount of co-worker or natural support that will be available at the workplace for an employee associated with supported employment services.

After the tour, Geri still needs to obtain such specific information about the gift shop as: volume of the gift business, number of employees, and hiring process. As Geri asked questions of Ms. Phelps regarding each of these areas she carefully continued to take notes. Geri wrote short notes to herself throughout the entire interview process. Although Geri is continually gathering information, she is careful to keep eye contact and not to look away from Ms. Phelps too frequently. Eye contact, smiles, and nods of affirmation can be a powerful way to communicate non-verbally.

Some employment specialists use their organization's forms to complete profile information on the employer and conduct job analyses, others feel comfortable jotting down notes. Geri always keeps a tape recorder in her car. Upon completing her informational interview and returning to her car Geri turned on her tape recorder and recorded additional notes that she was unable to write down during the interview process. It is important for Geri to record information, images, and conversations while they are still fresh in her mind. In addition, using a system similar to Geri's will allow employment specialists to actually expand on the information from their hand written notes.

Geri's company is very careful to keep an accurate data base of all employer interviews. When Geri returned to her office she completed her organization's Business Interview Form. In Geri's case this was not difficult or time consuming because she had her interview notes and tape recorder. These two sources of information allowed Geri to complete an accurate and detailed description of her informational interview with Ms. Phelps. The following is the business profile that Geri developed on Harriman's Hallmark Showcase Card and Gift Shop. A sample Business Interview Form is found in the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

BUSINESS INTERVIEW FORM

I. General Information

Company: Harriman's Hallmark Showcase Card and Gift Shop
Address: 9924 Main Street

Phone Number: (888) 261-8927

Contact Person: Jill Phelps

Title: Store Manager

II. Company Description

Number of Employees: 28 (15 full time and 13 part time)

Description of Company Products/ Services: Sell small gifts and cards and provides wedding preparation services to include: invitations, center pieces, cake decorations, and engraving.

Production Needs: This is a high volume store with 1,500 pieces of stock coming into the store twice per week.

Quality Needs: This store prides itself on customer service. In addition, the manager reports that she wants customers to be impressed with the image of the store Therefore, organization, cleanliness, and lighting are all critical elements to her, and her company.

III. Hiring Description

Hiring Process: The company has a formal hiring process with written job descriptions. The hiring process takes approximately two weeks from interview time. However, the time consuming factor is checking on references.

Projected Hiring Needs: Currently, the store has a need for a part-time stock clerk.

(Continued)

III. Hiring Description (continued)

Services Required From an Employment Service Business: Identification of a reliable labor pool that will come to work each day and who do not have transportation problems.

Other Employment Related Service Desires: An organization that would verify references of job applicants who make it for a second interview.

IV. Experience

Experience with Job Accommodation: None that she was aware of however, upon questioning she realized that she had done a scheduling accommodation for two employees who job share a full time position. This was done to accommodate both employees, after they had children.

Experience with Employees with Disabilities: Nothing extensive however, she believes that one of her employees has some minor heart problems.

Business Note of Appreciation

It is important for supported employment personnel to remember simple rules of etiquette when representing a supported employment organization to the business community. After completing an employer interview the employment specialist should always send a thank you letter. This will reinforce the name and services of the organization with the employer and assist with developing a strong rapport. In addition to a standard thank you note, an employment specialist will want to summarize some of the points that were discussed during the interview. For example, "I found it very interesting to learn about the sales clerk's duties. Thank you for inviting me for a tour of the storeroom. I look forward to seeing you again next Wednesday at 10:30 a.m." The following table presents some key points to remember re-garding a business note of appreciation.

WRITING A BUSINESS THANK-YOU NOTE

- Write the thank-you note on the same day as the visit.
- Address note of thanks to the Interviewer.
- Direct additional notes to other employees at the business site, if appropriate.
- Make the note brief.
- Personalize the note by adding something specific that occurred during the visit.
- Use this note to confirm the next appointment time or to add something that was missed during the interview.
- Mail the note the next morning if not mailed on the day of the appointment.

CRAFTING THE JOB SEARCH PLAN

Once the employment specialist has obtained pertinent information about the individual and a comfortable and effective level of communication has been established, it is time to develop a plan and strategy to begin the job search process. To begin this process the customer (job seeker), employment specialist, and his or her employment support team must correctly identify: 1) the type of work or career to pursue, 2) the best geographic area or location for the job site, and 3) person or persons responsible for finding community employment opportunities. A general rule of thumb from this point on is, the employment specialist should identify and utilize all available resources.

Vital to the success of the job-hunt process is to avoid getting boxed into one solution. The employment specialist must keep a broad focus and explore all possible options. Exploring one area or resource will not provide a supported employment job seeker with an option and will not encourage or solicit choice. Therefore, employment specialists will have to let go of the "do it all" perspective and take advantage of every community or natural support opportunity that exists. If done correctly there will be an increasing amount and level of assistance that will be utilized. Some assistance will come directly from the supported employment customer as well as her or his family, friends, and support network. This employment support team will be a great deal of assistance in crafting the job search plan.

Narrowing Down the Employment Field or Career Path

It will be important for the customer, employment specialist and/or the employment support team to target one or more possible fields of employment. To identify the type of job to pursue the employment specialist should assist the customer in reviewing, analyzing and synthesizing all information collected. As information is being synthesized common themes are identified that can be tied together including the areas that are presented below.

IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT FIELDS AND CAREER PATHS

- Skills
- Special Interests
- Ideal Environments
- Salary Needs
- Experience with Tools and/or Technology
- Social interactions

Narrowing down the employment field with Bruce did not initially hold many apparent answers for Bruce or his employment specialist. As a result of a brain injury, Bruce has been using an effective augmentative communication system for four years. Reviewing Bruce's job search file the employment specialist remembered an event at a local department store. When Bruce entered this very large store he went directly to the sporting goods department where he began picking-up fishing rods and asking the store clerk questions. In addition, notes from the initial home visit revealed that Bruce's mother reported that he loved to go fishing with his brother. His formal medical records indicate that prior to his accident, he was an organizational member of aspiring professional Bass Masters.

This information alone, at a surface level, reveals that Bruce has an overwhelming interest in fishing. This interest, in some capacity, should be an initial starting point for what type of employment to pursue. Typically, the information will not dictate the type of work, but rather the essential characteristics a good employment selection should entail. If it proves not to be feasible to locate the individual's first choice or ideal employment, the same characteristics should be included in the jobs that are ultimately identified. Other characteristics should be incorporated into the individual's life as positive work reinforcers or to meet a social/recreational need. Ultimately, a customer's career path will be determined by personal strengths, positive characteristics, skills, and preferences identified through common themes.

Defining the Geographic Area

The members of the customer's employment support team should be a great deal of assistance to the customer in defining the geographic location which best suit his or her needs. Another rich source of information regarding the geographic area for job search activities is to determine where people in the general public and/or community tend to work. This is especially true in rural areas although trends are also typically identified in inner-city and suburban neighborhoods. It will be very important for the employment specialist to respect and value the individual's right to self-sufficiency and independence. This will be critical when addressing the location of the potential job and the available mode of transportation in the community.

Some communities may have elaborate specialized transportation systems, however if the individual feels stigmatized by accessing this transportation option and prefers a job in walking distance to her/his home, this choice must be honored. In addition, the employment specialist may feel that there is more risk involved for the individual to take a city bus or cab as compared to riding with a family member. However, if the customer prefers not to ride with his or her parents or family members then the employment specialist should respect the customer's preferences and assist in arranging for comprehensive bus training support and training. The opposite could also be true, the individual may choose to work a significant distance from home, possibly at the same location or vicinity as a neighbor, friend, or family member. This would provide an opportunity for the customer to car pool with a familiar person.

The employment specialist should not become discouraged if the perfect job opportunity presents itself when family or friends are not scheduled to work and car pooling no longer appears to be an option. Nothing should be ruled out. Explore additional resources for transportation: co-workers, as well as their knowledge of friends traveling in the same direction at the same time of day; riding to work with one person and returning home with another; advertising for a driver by contacting community churches or civic organizations; negotiating with the employer for the shift that is most compatible for the individual. In general, an employer who is invested in hiring the most qualified applicant for a job, is willing to be flexible to accommodate her or his individual needs. When determining the geographic location, don't exclude any business, regardless of size or intimidating hiring practices, from the possibility of having a potential employment opportunity. The following is a list of tips for defining the geographic area for job development.

DEFINING THE JOB SEARCH GEOGRAPHIC AREA

- Customer choice
- Near home or school (depending on transportation)
- Near family and/or friend's place of employment
- Favorite restaurant
- Favorite store
- Favorite type of Business
- Favorite location

Managing the Job Search

The best way to determine who is responsible for finding employment opportunities is to talk with the customer and his or her employment support team to determine what role each person is willing to play. This includes asking a support individual what she or he intends to do to assist in the job search. It is important for the employment specialist to encourage the job seeker's participation. This participation will help to foster a sense of pride, ownership and control of the job search. Once key individuals have been identified and a commitment has been established, it is important to determine the exact responsibilities of each person and develop a strategy. Individual's role should be outlined and provided in a format that is clear. For example, a job seeker may choose to contact employers independently or with another person. A parent may choose to contact employers independently or with his son or daughter to explore current job openings. In either situation, he or she may need to be prompted (as part of the strategy) to collect a company business card and written job description or utilize a questionnaire to assist in obtaining pertinent information. If the individual is unable to write, she/he may use a pocket sized tape recorder to gather the information or may request that the potential employer com-plete the questionnaire. These activities will help the employment specialist when following up on a job lead. A typical questionnaire would include the items in the checklist below.

Questionnaire Checklist:

Name of Business
Business Address
Telephone Number
Person Contacted
Person to Contact
Position Available

Supporting a job seeker to take on some of the job hunting activities of job development can hold many benefits reaching beyond the customer ownership benefits that have been discussed previously. For instance, the customer may be demonstrating to the employer such skills as initiation and determination, that may not have been readily identified. These types of interactions will begin to build an immediate relationship. In some cases, the employment specialist may accompany an individual to a potential employer visit and merely stand back while the individual presents herself or himself. However, when contacting employers in pairs, it is best to role play activities prior to the presentation. This will help the employment specialist to identify possible areas where immediate assistance may be required. There are many tasks the individual may choose to perform.

Managing the Job Search Case Study

Mary Beth lived most of her life in a residential institution for persons with chronic mental illness. However, in the past three years Mary Beth has shared an apartment with a friend. Both women receive support from a residential services counselor, as part of the local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services Program. Mary Beth does not have many support people available to her. Yet, Mary Beth was able to assemble the following members for an employment support team: a Jaycees member (Mary Beth joined this group last year because the Jaycees's organizational philosophy is to offer employment assistance to help members with personal growth), church minister, residential services counselor and roommate. Even though Mary Beth was able to develop an employment support team she choose to utilize the employment specialist as the primary job developer. The following plan identified the job development task that each member was willing to perform.

MANAGING THE JOB SEARCH

Employment Support Team Members and Responsibility

1. **Name: Mary Beth**
   Relationship: Job Seeker
   Phone Number:
   Daytime: 734-9986
   Evening: 567-0912

   Support: Direct the job search process. She will meet with the employment specialist twice weekly and will actively participate in 5 community job screenings in the next two weeks. Meet with the employment specialist once a week.

2. **Name: Jack Adams**
   Relationship: Residential Service Counselor
   Phone Number:
   Daytime: 779-0986
   Evening: 898-6654

   Support: Jack will drive Mary Beth to the 5 job site visits and assist with data collection. In addition, Jack will actively network to assist Mary Beth in finding a job. Jack will report all job leads to the employment specialist.

3. **Name: Marsha Mink**
   Relationship: Jaycees Member
   Phone Number:
   Daytime: 779-0932
   Evening: 876-0985

   Support: Marsha will actively use all of her member and community connections to job network for Mary Beth and assist her in meeting her employment goals. Marsha will report job leads to the employment specialist.

4. **Name: Brother John**
Relationship: Church Elder
Phone Number:
Daytime: 778-1234
Evening: 865-2345

Support: Brother John will actively discuss Marsha's interest in employment with church members. Brother John will give all job leads to the employment specialist.

5. **Name: Susan James**
Relationship: Employment Specialist
Phone Number:
Daytime: 7784567
Evening: 876-0912

Support: Susan will work directly with Mary Beth to ensure that she is fully participating in her job search. As employment support members call with job leads, Susan will review them with Mary Beth and determine who will follow up on each lead. Susan will keep a data base on all businesses that are contacted and business profiles that are developed.

TYPES OF EMPLOYER CONTACT

There are many different types of employer contacts. The job development objectives will direct the specific employer contact. However, job development is not a systematic or sequential process. For example, the employment specialist may be at a community business to complete an introduction of the service organization to the employer. During the visit, the employer becomes impressed with the employment specialist's organizational description and shares information about an unadvertised job opening. It is important to remember that an employment specialist and/or customer must always be prepared to respond to an immediate job opening, even if it is to turn down the position, because it is not appropriate to respond without enough time to analyze the position. Employer contacts can take many forms to include: the letter of introduction, informational phone calling, cold calling, and net-working. This section overviews each of these major forms.

Personal Letter of Introduction

The letter of introduction will be the initial employer contact for most organizations. Typically, in this formal business letter the supported employment organization is requesting an appointment for an informational interview or job interview. When the job seeker develops a letter of introduction, she or he will want to briefly explain the purpose of the request, an overall career objective, experience and abilities. The following table presents a list of important factors for a customer to include in a letter of introduction.

PERSONAL LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

- Name
- Contact Information
- Purpose of Letter
- Personal Career Objective
- Relevant Work Experience
- Talents or Abilities
- Personal Interest

The introductory letter will take on a different look when it is representing the supported employment organization. However, like the personal letter of introduction, the employment specialist will want to keep this letter brief and business like. It will be important for the employment specialist to include a brief explanation of the organization, and reason for requesting the interview. For example, Jan Smith of EPI employment services is seeking information regarding the company's current opening in the medical records department.

Phone Call

Some people have excellent telephone skills. Others are better in person or with written communication. Typically, those employment specialists who are able to conduct a great deal of business over the phone are individuals who are extremely comfortable using this form of communication. It is important for the employment specialist to develop some level of comfort when using the telephone. Key to success will be identifying the correct person in the business who has hiring power. Do not get discouraged, this could take as many as six different phone calls just to identify the correct person. Following the few basic rules that are presented here will help ensure success.

CONDUCTING A BUSINESS TELEPHONE CALL

- Make the call brief
- Identify appropriate contact person
- Set up appointment for interview
- Follow up on letter of introduction
- Inquire as to hiring decision.

Sample Telephone Call #1

"Hello, I am Jeri Goodfellow from Monarch Employment Services. I know that you have positions available for landscapers, and I have several people who meet your qualifications. I am interested in learning more about your personnel needs so I can present you with the best candidate. Would you be available for a half hour meeting sometime next Wednesday or Thursday?"

Sample Telephone Call #2

"Hello, I am Jeri Goodfellow from Monarch Employment Services. We specialize in filling personnel needs for local employers, as well as, performing job search activities for people with disabilities. I understand that you have positions available for landscapers. I'm interested in learning more about this position and the specific job qualifications. I represent several people who are interested and have experience with this line of work. Would you be available for half an hour for a meeting next Wednesday or Thursday?"

As discussed earlier, job development is not a sequential process. At times, a short, simple business telephone contact may turn into a business interview. In the event that this occurs the employment specialist must be prepared to embrace the opportunity and let the employer guide the telephone conversation. Gaining experience with telephone interviewing will help to increase confidence and build success. There are several things that the employment specialist can do to improve telephone interviewing skills. The following table presents ten tips for success.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING TIPS

1. Become sincerely interested with the employer's business.
2. Take a deep breath and relax.
3. Smile, it really works and will put a lilt in your voice.
4. Speak slow enough to insure understanding.
5. Speak clearly and purposefully.
6. Use the other person's name frequently.
7. Have a checklist of items to discuss prepared prior to the contact.
8. Take readable notes.
9. Relax and let the employer talk.
10. Listen carefully and organize your thoughts.

Cold Call

A cold call is one in which the individual or employment specialist has not had any previous contact with the employer or the company. If the business is small and informal, (i.e., a neighborhood garage) a cold call may yield results. Even in this situation, it is best to try to get a name of a contact person before you visit. This extra investigation demonstrates that you have an interest in the business and are serious about establishing a professional relationship. It is important to remember that under the best circumstances an employment specialist must be prepared for a lot of rejection with job development. When conducting cold calls the rejection rate increases to an even greater rate. It will be important for the employment and/or job seeker to remain positive when using this approach.

Networking

Networking can be viewed as a job development grapevine. The employment support team involves their networks in the job search process. The network accesses their own networks and pretty soon, the word is getting out that Susan Smith is a talented, experienced receptionist and is looking for the right company. In general, most people find jobs through informal networks. In addition, the employment specialist and customer are able to learn about the specific needs of a business through a well connected network.

As the employment support team firmly establishes the personal and professional networking process, business and community club networking should begin. Organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, or churches, temples, and synagogues will yield successful results. **Networking will provide the best results because it is based on personal relationships.**

SALES TECHNIQUES

Employment specialists should develop the attitude that they are a marketing representative of supported employment. As a marketing representative the employment specialist will be required to sell their organization to community businesses. This should not be a terrifying experience. There are many tried and true sales techniques that have proven to be successful. The following table presents sales techniques for successfully marketing supported employment services.

Successful Sales Techniques

- Maintain professionalism when talking with employers.
- Use language that is clear and precise; eliminate social service jargon.
- Dress for the business-informational interview.
- Expect twenty calls to yield one or two successful employment interviews.
- Adopt a friendly and sincere outlook; leave problems at the office.
- Spend more time listening rather than talking; the employer will tell you what you need to know for employment selection.
- Market individual performance and services, do not use labels or diagnoses in your discussions with employers.
- Anticipate objections and know how to answer them without becoming defensive.
- Arrive armed with data on employment success of people with disabilities and your own employment services successes (i.e. number of people in jobs, average starting salaries, types of jobs, employer reference letters).

Those employment specialists who become comfortable with sales may begin to use more aggressive sales techniques. However, hard sell practices should be avoided. Using high pressure techniques will not prove successful over time. Hard sell techniques are a bad business practice among people who are professional salespersons.

JOB ANALYSIS

A detailed job analysis is not always necessary. However, in some cases the customer and/or employment specialist will want to spend time on the job site. Performing the essential functions of the job allows the employment specialist to become completely familiar with the position and the job site. The amount of time that is required to spend on the job site can vary from one hour to a full day. The complexity of the work environment, as well as the customer's support needs will determine the amount of additional information that is needed to make the employment selection.

After the employment specialist has obtained information concerning a specific job opening, he or she should attempt to observe someone performing that job in its various phases. Taking notes or speaking into a tape recorder will assist the employment specialist in gathering needed information. It will be helpful for the employment specialist to begin gaining information about the work routine. Observations should include various tasks performed, essential job functions, critical skills needed related to each job duty, and approximate time spent engaged in each job task.

After the employment specialist has interviewed the employer and observed the job being performed, she or he should know exactly what the job entails. One way to summarize this information is to use a form specifically designed for this purpose. This form, along with additional notes will provide a permanent record of both specific job requirements and general work characteristics of the work site.

The information that is included in a job analysis is gathered in three ways: a) interviews with the employer and co-workers, b) observations of the job, and c) a summary interview of the information collected during a and b. Job analysis information is used to guide customers in the employment selection process. The job analysis data that the employment specialist and/or job seeker gathers is crucial to the success of a strong customer-driven approach to employment selection.

Job Analysis Case Study

Tim, an employment specialist with Job Inc. had met with Everson Community Bank for an information interview. During the interview the employer shared that she had an immediate job opening in the office services department. Tim negotiated with the employer to return to the bank on the following day to analyze the confidential document shredder. Over a cup of coffee, Tim talked to the lead employee in this department to gather some general information about the position to include: schedule, travel, and routine. Tim then watched an employee perform the tasks associated with document shredding to obtain such specific information as strength requirements, endurance requirements, reinforcement available, and mentor support available. After taking notes for a period of time, Tim transferred these notes onto his organization's job analysis form. Below is a sample of three completed sections of the form that were noted for the Everson Community Bank's confidential document shredder position.

1. Schedule

Weekends: YES
Evening: NO
Part-time: YES
Full-time: YES

Comments: Business hours are from 7:00 a.m.-6 p.m. Part-time job is available

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4. Strength

Very Light:
Light: YES
Average:
Heavy:
Very Heavy

Comments: Manipulation of bales onto dolly - average 30-40 lbs, co-worker support available.

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5. Endurance

2 hrs with break:
2-3 hrs with break: YES
3-4 hrs with break:
4 hrs with break:

Comments: Typical break schedule is one 5 min. Break in the a.m. and one in the p.m. Lunch break is a hour.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Once again the career planning process and informational interviewing will provide some information on what accommodations may be needed. The thorough job analysis techniques presented in this section will yield an even richer data base. Specific job accommodations must be defined by the individual and not the employer. Yet, the employer will play a pivotal role in the entire process. Typically, the best time to discuss job accommodations, as well as the need for assistive technology and supports, including natural supports, will be during the job interview process. However, it will be through the comprehensive investigation and job analysis techniques that the customer and/or employment specialist will be able to offer support strategies and accommodations to match specific business needs.

It is vital for the employment specialist to have a **vision** of how a job accommodation can impact the employability of a customer. Too often people with significant disabilities are screened out of employment because an employment specialist or customer could not envision the right accommodation or support. An occupational therapist, rehabilitation technologist, and/or rehabilitation engineer can assist the customer and the employment specialist in analyzing the work site and developing possible accommodations and supports. The following table presents a list of some possible job accommodations.

JOB ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Work Schedule
2. Job Sharing
3. Work Responsibilities
4. Work Materials
5. Work Tools
6. Work Equipment
7. Assistive Technology
8. Work Site Modifications
9. Job Carving
10. Job Coaching Services

JOB RESTRUCTURING

Often when the employment specialist is engaged in job development activities, for job seekers with significant disabilities, it may be beneficial to negotiate a job restructuring with an employer. According to Hagner and Dileo, (1993) this strategy may also be known as job creation. However, many supported employment personnel may be more familiar with such terms as job restructuring or job carving. Moon et al., 1990 define job restructuring as the redistribution of job tasks that cannot be performed by the job seeker. These tasks are given to a co-worker in exchange for a task that the job seeker can do.

An aspect which may be involved in the negotiation of job restructuring or carving is the careful analysis of exchanging job duties. It is important not to relegate the job seeker to a specific job or work task which is stigmatizing or devalued (Hagner & Dileo, 1993). Job restructuring is an excellent strategy to use with a job seeker who may not be necessarily "qualified" or able to perform all aspects of a current job opening.

Job restructuring holds many benefits. An immediate and obvious benefit to job restructuring is that it is a means for assisting a job seeker to access employment. However, job restructuring holds many, less obvious, short and long term benefits to the employer and or business. Some of the benefits to the business includes: increased efficiency, increased quality, improved customer service, and improved productivity.

Job restructuring ideas may not be obvious. The employment specialist must spend time analyzing a business to determine the potential or undiscovered need. Once the employment specialist has made a reasonable discovery, the idea must be discussed with the employer. Some of the best ideas for job restructuring have resulted from informal conversations regarding personnel issues.

Job Restructuring Case Study

Mike, an employment specialist with Employment Inc., was invited to meet with Dean Jackson at the EPPD World Headquarters in Corry, Pennsylvania. Mike has had a couple of business interviews with Dean. So when several landscaping positions became vacant at EPPD, Dean called Mike to see if the position would be appropriate for any of the supported employment customers that his company represents. While Mike was on-site Dean invited Mike to have lunch with their director of personnel. The personnel director became very interested in the full array of services that Employment Inc. offered, including job restructuring. After discussing some of the favorable conditions for job restructuring, the personnel director stated that he needed to do some job restructuring in his own department. Mike was invited to return to EPPD to analyze the personnel associate position. EPPD's personnel associates had just turned in a report informing the company that they were only able to do a job recruit 50% of their total work time, because 40% of their time was spent entering data on recruits and other personnel issues. The high percentage of time associated with data entry was becoming a very frustrating issue for all of the associates for the following reasons: 1) they were hired to conduct job recruiting and other personnel functions, 2) data entry is boring, 3) poor data entry skills, and 4) data is questionable because too many mistakes are made. Following lunch Mike felt confident that he would soon have a data entry position for a customer at EPPD.

SUMMARY

Employment specialists should routinely assess their results. Remember that every job development activity has an objective. Be sure to count all activities to include such process objectives as business flyer development, business card development, number of informational interview contacts, and number of job analyses conducted. In addition, it will be important to note the accomplishment of outcome objectives and as the number of supported employment customers who were assisted in accessing and maintaining community integrated competitive employment. Quality organizational marketing and job development takes time. These activities are based upon relationship building with individuals with disabilities and employers, and, as such, are long term objectives.

REFERENCES

Hagner, D. & Dileo, D. (1993). Working together: Worplace Culture, supported employment and persons with disabilities. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Moon, S., Inge, K.J., Wehman, P., Brooke, V., & Barcus, J.M. (1990). Helping persons with severe mental retardation get and keep employment. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

APPENDIX

- Business Interview Form
- Job Analysis Form for Everson Community Bank
- Job Analysis Form

Business Interview Form

I. *General Information*

Company:

Date Completed:

Address:

(city) (state) (zip)

Telephone Number:

FAX Number:

E-Mail Address:

Contact Person:

Title:

II. *Company Description*

Total Number of Employees:

Number of Employees Per Shift:

Description of Company Product or Service:

Production Needs:

Quality Needs:

III. Hiring Description

Hiring Process: ____________________

____

____

____

Project Hiring Needs: ____________________

____

____

____

Service Required for Employment Service Business:

____

____

____

____

Other Employment Related Service Desires: ____________________

____

____

IV. Experience

Experience with Job Accommodations: ____________________

____

____

Experience with Employee with Disabilities: ____________________

____

____

____

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Job Analysis Form

Company Name: Everson Community Bank

Staff: ______________________ Date: 3 / 12 / ____
(mo) (day) (year)

Address: 123 Market Street, City, LA, ____
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Telephone Number: 987-2167 FAX Number: 987-2168

Contact Person: Jane Dalton Title: Branch Manager

Job Title: Confidential Document Shredder

Current hourly wage (or wage at last date of employment in this position): $6.10

Did a wage change occur since the last Job Screening or Job Update? Yes [✓ No]

If yes, complete this section:
Hourly rate changed from: $_____ to $_____ on ___/___/___
Hourly rate changed from: $_____ to $_____ on ___/___/___

Number of Hours per week: 27 Month per year: 12

If less than 12 months per year, what months is the job not available: ______________________

Number of employees in this company at this location: 10

Number of employees without disabilities in immediate area (50 ft. radius): 0

Number of other employees w/disabilities: 0 In immediate area (50 ft. radius): 0

Number of other employees in this position: 0 During the same hours: 0

General Directions: PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEM UNANSWERED!

Indicate the most appropriate response for each item based on observations of the job and interview with employers, supervisors, and coworkers. Record special instructions, regulations or comments under each item for greater detail.

1. **Schedule: (check Yes or No for each item)**

Weekend work required: _x_Yes ___No Evening work required: ___Yes _x_No
Part-time job: _x_Yes ___No Full-time job: _x_Yes ___No

Specifics/Comments:______________________________

2. **Travel Location: (check Yes or No for each item)**

On public transportation route: ___Yes _x_No On private transportation route: ___Yes _x_No

Specifics/Comments:______________________________

3. **Strength — Lifting and Carrying:**

___ Very light work (< 10 lbs) ___ Light work (10-20 lbs)
_x_ Average work (30-40 lbs) ___ Heave work (> 50 lbs)

Specifics/Comments: Manipulation of bales onto dolly — average 30 - 40 lbs.

4. **Endurance: (without breaks)**

___ Work required for < 2 hours _x_ Work required for 2-3 hours
___ Work required for 3-4 hours ___ Work required for > 4 hours

Specifics/Comments: Typical break schedule, one 5 min break in the a.m. & one 5 min. Break in the p.m. - Lunch is an hour.

5. **Orienting:**

___ Small area _x_ One room ___ Several rooms ___ Building wide
___ Building and Grounds

Specifics/Comments:______________________________

6. **Accessibility:**

_x_ Fully accessible site ___ Accessibility issues

Specifics/Comments:______________________________

7. **Work Pace:**

___Slow pace _x_Average steady pace ___Sometimes fast pace ___Continual fast pace

Specifics/Comments:______________________________

8. Appearance Requirements:

____ Grooming of little importance
_x_ Neat and lean required
____ Cleanliness only required
____ Grooming very important

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

9. Communication Required:

____ None/minimal
____ Unclear speech accepted
_x_ Key words/signs needed
____ Clear speech in sentences/signs needed

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

10. Social Interactions:

____ Social interactions not required
____ Social interactions required infrequently
_x_ Appropriate responses required
____ Social interactions required frequently

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

11. Attention to Task Perseverance:

____ Frequent prompts available
____ Intermittent prompts/low supervision available
____ Intermittent prompts/high supervision available
_x_ Infrequent prompts/low supervision available

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

12. Sequencing of Job Duties:

____ Only one task required at a time
____ 4-6 tasks required in sequence
_x_ 2-3 tasks required in sequence
____ 7 or more tasks required in sequence

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

13. Initiation of Work Motivation:

_x_ Initiation of work required
____ Volunteering helpful
____ Co-worker support available

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

14. Daily Changes in Routine:

___7 or more changes ___4-6 task changes ___2-3 task changes _x_No task change

Specifics/Comments: ___

15. Reinforcement Available:

___ Frequent reenforcement available ___ Reinforcement intermittent (daily)
___ Reinforcement infrequent (weekly) _x_ Minimal reinforcement (pay check)

Specifics/Comments: ___

16. Co-Worker Supports Available:

___ None available ___ Low to minimum potential ___ Intermittent potential
___ High potential

Specifics/Comments: ___

17. Supportive of Job Accommodations:

___Very supportive ___Supportive w/reservations ___ Indifferent ___ Negative
___ Unknown

Specifics/Comments: ___

18. Employer's Financial Requirements:

_x_ Financial incentives not necessary ___ Tax credit or incentive (e.g., TJTC, or OJT)
___ Subminimum wage

Specifics/Comments: ___

19. Opportunity for Career Advancement:

___ Low to minimum ___ Average ___ Most probable ___ Procedures in place
___ No procedures in place

Specifics/Comments: ___

20. Object Discrimination:

___ Does not need to distinguish between work supplies
___ Must distinguish between work supplies with an external cue
_x_ Must distinguish between work supplies

Specifics/Comments: ___

21. Time:

___ Time factors not important
___ Must tell time to the hour
_x_ Must identify breaks/meals/etc.
___ Must tell time to the minute

Specifics/Comments: ______________________

22. Functional Reading:

___ None ___ Sight words/symbols ___ Simple reading ___ Fluent reading

Specifics/Comments: ______________________

23. Functional Math:

_x_ None ___ Simple counting ___ Simple addition/subtraction
___ Complex computational skills

Specifics/Comments: ______________________

24. Street Crossing:

_x_ None
___ Must cross 2 lane street w/out light
___ Must cross 4 lane street w/out light
___ Must cross 2 lane street with light
___ Must cross 4 lane street with light

Specifics/Comments: ______________________

25. Visibility to Public:

_x_ Consumer not visible
___ Regularly visible
___ Occasionally visible
___ Visible throughout the day/ongoing

Specifics/Comments: ______________________

26. If individual known, is the job in accordance with individual's vision, preference goals?

___ No ___ Close approximation (stepping stone) ___ Yes

27. Benefits of Job:

0	=	None	___ Yes	_x_ No
1	=	Sick Leave	_x_ Yes	___ No
2	=	Medical/health benefits	_x_ Yes	___ No
3	=	Paid vacation/annual leave	_x_ Yes	___ No
4	=	Dental benefits	___ Yes	_x_ No

5 = Employee discounts ___ Yes _x_ No
6 = Free or reduced meals ___ Yes _x_ No
7 = Other (specify):________________________________

28. Level of Social Contact: (check one)

___ Employment in an integrated environment on a shift or position which is isolated. Contact with co-workers or supervisors is minimal. Example: Night Janitor.

_x_ Employment in an integrated environment on a shift or position which is relatively isolated. Contact with co-workers or supervisors is available at lunch or break. Example: Data Entry Position.

___ Employment in an integrated environment in a position requiring a moderate level of interdependent tasking and co-worker interaction. Example: Office Service Aide - copying documents.

___ Employment in an integrated environment in a position requiring a high degree of interdependent tasks and co-worker interactions and/or high level of contact with business customers. Example: Wal-Mart Greeter.

29. List any job experience (skills) needed for this position: ________________________

Comments:

Rate of employee turnover (annual percentage): __5__ Overall __25__ This Position

Number of supervisors: __1__ Rate of supervisor turnover: __1__

Written job description available? __No__

What are the *absolute* "don'ts" for an employee in this position? (Manager's pet peeves, reasons for dismissal, etc.)

Insubordination, excessive absences, disregard of safety and break of confidentiality.

Environmental characteristics (physical barriers, temperature extremes, etc.):

Extremes in temperature and exposure to paper dust

Additional Comments:

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Job Analysis Form

Company Name: ____________________

Staff: ____________________ Date: ____________________
(mo) (day) (year)

Address: ____
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Telephone Number: ____________________ FAX Number: ____________________

Contact Person: ____________________ Title: ____________________

Job Title: ____

Current hourly wage (or wage at last date of employment in this position): ____________

Did a wage change occur since the last *Job Screening* or *Job Update*? ___Yes ___No

If yes, complete this section:
Hourly rate changed from: $_____ to $_____ on ___/___/___
Hourly rate changed from: $_____ to $_____ on ___/___/___

Number of Hours per week: ____________ Month per year: ____________

If less than 12 months per year, what months is the job not available: ____________

Number of employees in this company at this location: ____________

Number of employees without disabilities in immediate area (50 ft. radius): ____________

Number of other employees w/disabilities: ______ In immediate area (50 ft. radius): ______

Number of other employees in this position: ______ During the same hours: ______

General Directions: ***PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEM UNANSWERED!***

Indicate the most appropriate response for each item based on *observations of the job* and interview with employers, supervisors, and coworkers. Record special instructions, regulations or comments under each item for greater detail.

1. **Schedule: (check Yes or No for each item)**

Weekend work required: ___Yes ___No Evening work required: ___Yes ___No
Part-time job: ___Yes ___No Full-time job: ___Yes ___No

Specifics/Comments:____

2. **Travel Location: (check Yes or No for each item)**

On public transportation route: ___Yes ___No On private transportation route: ___Yes ___No

Specifics/Comments:____

3. **Strength — Lifting and Carrying:**

___ Very light work (< 10 lbs) ___ Light work (10-20 lbs)
___ Average work (30-40 lbs) ___ Heavy work (> 50 lbs)

Specifics/Comments:
____

4. **Endurance: (without breaks)**

___ Work required for < 2 hours ___ Work required for 2-3 hours
___ Work required for 3-4 hours ___ Work required for > 4 hours

Specifics/Comments:
____

5. **Orienting:**

___ Small area ___ One room ___ Several rooms ___ Building wide
___ Building and Grounds

Specifics/Comments: ____

6. **Accessibility:**

___ Fully accessible site ___ Accessibility issues

Specifics/Comments: ____

7. **Work Pace:**

___Slow pace ___Average steady pace ___Sometimes fast pace ___Continual fast pace

Specifics/Comments: ____

8. Appearance Requirements:

___ Grooming of little importance
___ Neat and lean required
___ Cleanliness only required
___ Grooming very important

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

9. Communication Required:

___ None/minimal
___ Unclear speech accepted
___ Key words/signs needed
___ Clear speech in sentences/signs needed

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

10. Social Interactions:

___ Social interactions not required
___ Social interactions required infrequently
___ Appropriate responses required
___ Social interactions required frequently

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

11. Attention to Task Perseverance:

___ Frequent prompts available
___ Intermittent prompts/low supervision available
___ Intermittent prompts/high supervision available
___ Infrequent prompts/low supervision available

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

12. Sequencing of Job Duties:

___ Only one task required at a time
___ 4-6 tasks required in sequence
___ 2-3 tasks required in sequence
___ 7 or more tasks required in sequence

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

13. Initiation of Work Motivation:

_X_ Initiation of work required ___ Volunteering helpful ___ Co-worker support available

Specifics/Comments: ______________________________

14. Daily Changes in Routine:

___7 or more changes ___4-6 task changes ___2-3 task changes ___No task change

Specifics/Comments: ____

15. Reinforcement Available:

___ Frequent reinforcement available ___ Reinforcement intermittent (daily)
___ Reinforcement infrequent (weekly) ___ Minimal reinforcement (pay check)

Specifics/Comments: ____

16. Co-Worker Supports Available:

___ None available ___ Low to minimum potential ___ Intermittent potential
___ High potential

Specifics/Comments: ____

17. Supportive of Job Accommodations:

___Very supportive ___Supportive w/reservations ___ Indifferent ___ Negative
___ Unknown

Specifics/Comments: ____

18. Employer's Financial Requirements:

___ Financial incentives not necessary ___ Tax credit or incentive (e.g., TJTC, or OJT)
___ Subminimum wage

Specifics/Comments: ____

19. Opportunity for Career Advancement:

___ Low to minimum ___ Average ___ Most probable ___ Procedures in place
___ No procedures in place

Specifics/Comments: ____

20. Object Discrimination:

___ Does not need to distinguish between work supplies
___ Must distinguish between work supplies with an external cue
___ Must distinguish between work supplies

Specifics/Comments: ____

21. Time:

___ Time factors not important
___ Must tell time to the hour
___ Must identify breaks/meals/etc.
___ Must tell time to the minute

Specifics/Comments: ____

22. Functional Reading:

___ None ___ Sight words/symbols ___ Simple reading ___ Fluent reading

Specifics/Comments: ____

23. Functional Math:

___ None ___ Simple counting ___ Simple addition/subtraction
___ Complex computational skills

Specifics/Comments: ____

24. Street Crossing:

___ None
___ Must cross 2 lane street w/out light
___ Must cross 4 lane street w/out light
___ Must cross 2 lane street with light
___ Must cross 4 lane street with light

Specifics/Comments: ____

25. Visibility to Public:

___ Consumer not visible
___ Regularly visible
___ Occasionally visible
___ Visible throughout the day/ongoing

Specifics/Comments: ____

26. If individual known, is the job in accordance with individual's vision, preference goals?

___ No ___ Close approximation (stepping stone) ___ Yes

27. Benefits of Job:

0 = None ___ Yes ___ No
1 = Sick Leave ___ Yes ___ No
2 = Medical/health benefits ___ Yes ___ No
3 = Paid vacation/annual leave ___ Yes ___ No
4 = Dental benefits ___ Yes ___ No

5 = Employee discounts ___ Yes ___ No
6 = Free or reduced meals ___ Yes ___ No
7 = Other (specify):______________________________

28. Level of Social Contact: (check one)

___ Employment in an integrated environment on a shift or position which is isolated. Contact with co-workers or supervisors is minimal. Example: Night Janitor.

___ Employment in an integrated environment on a shift or position which is relatively isolated. Contact with co-workers or supervisors is available at lunch or break. Example: Data Entry Position.

___ Employment in an integrated environment in a position requiring a moderate level of interdependent tasking and co-worker interaction. Example: Office Service Aide - copying documents.

___ Employment in an integrated environment in a position requiring a high degree of interdependent tasks and co-worker interactions and/or high level of contact with business customers. Example: Wal-Mart Greeter.

29. List any job experience (skills) needed for this position: ______________________________
____
____

Comments:

Rate of employee turnover (annual percentage): _____ Overall _____ This Position

Number of supervisors: ____________ Rate of supervisor turnover: ____________

Written job description available? ____________

What are the absolute "don'ts" for an employee in this position? (Manager's pet peeves, reasons for dismissal, etc.)

____
____
____
____
____

Environmental characteristics (physical barriers, temperature extremes, etc.):

Additional Comments:

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5

Employment Selection

Successful supported employment personnel will need to utilize a multitude of approaches to assist supported employment customers with the employment selection process. Most customers will need the assistance of an employment specialist to manage the screening, selection, and/or job modifications of competitive employment opportunities as he or she directs the employment process. Customers of supported employment will search for a full range of employment positions to include jobs that require post-secondary degrees, high school diplomas, and/or high school equivalency certificates. However, many individuals with significant disabilities will begin their employment careers by accessing entry level positions that do not have stringent hiring requirements. This will occur for many reasons such as: 1) there are a greater number of entry level positions, 2) customers need a pay check, and 3) positions are easily modified. However, the primary reason is that these positions offer work experience and an opportunity to build an employment resume.

In the past, supported employment personnel have been expected to analyze the customer's needs, assess the job market, identify available job openings, determine specific work responsibilities, provide support, and then match customers to job openings. Rushing to fill employment openings has caused service providers to exclude customers from the decision making process. Employment specialists deciding what is good for a customer is not support, it is control disguised as service. These employment approaches have developed over time as a result of administrative conveniences or concerns. Examples of administrative conveniences would include: external quotas set by funding agents, internal quotas or program goals set by administrators, intervention dependent programs where funding is more lucrative after employment selection and before stabilization, and managers who lack supported employment knowledge or values. However, these approaches have never been best practices for employment selection which is designed to ensure satisfaction among persons with significant disabilities and the business community. The following is a list of possible explanations for programs rushing the employment selection process.

REASONS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS RUSH EMPLOYMENT SELECTION

- External Quota Systems
- Internal Quota Systems
- Intervention Dependent Programs
- Lack of Supported Employment Knowledge
- Lack of Supported Employment Values

In today's highly competitive employment market, employment specialists and other supported employment personnel must have a strong knowledge base from which they can interpret information in a knowledgeable manner with the customer. This knowledge base must cover a vast array of topics ranging from person-centered planning approaches and assistive technology applications to labor market trends, and legislative rights and responsibilities. The table below presents a comprehensive list of topics that will be important to every employment specialist.

EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE BASE

- Person-Centered Planning Approaches
- Marketing Approaches
- Job Seeking Skills
- Job Interviewing Skills
- Job Analysis

(Continued)

- Employment Trends
- Labor Market Information & Wage Data
- Business & Industry Needs
- Assistive Technology
- Compensatory Strategies
- Systematic Instruction
- Knowledge of Community Resources
- Legislative Rights and Responsibilities (ADA, Social Security, Worker Compensation, Fair Labor Standards Act, Vocational Rehabilitation Act)
- Career Counseling Techniques
- Coaching Techniques
- Facilitation Techniques
- Group & Interpersonal Dynamics

High quality employment selection will require employment specialists to draw upon their extensive knowledge base to assist the supported employment customer with employment selection. This will consist of gathering and analyzing detailed information regarding the customer profile (i.e. wants, needs, desires, abilities, interest etc.) and compare this information with employment opportunities. During this process employment specialists must remain positive, enthusiastic, and optimistic. It will be important to analyze specific job openings in terms of what the individual "can do" with the right supports and/or modifications. Employment specialists can not be deterred by negativism, complex work environments, or employment qualifications; rather, they must rely upon their creativity and analytical skills.

There is no recipe, form, or computer program designed to make a perfect job match. However, an employment specialist can increase the likelihood of success by analyzing customer and business profile data, using good judgement, and by making accurate information available to the supported employment customer and her or his family so they can make an informed choice. There are various tools and procedures that employment specialists can use to increase customer success and satisfaction with a new job. The remaining portion of this chapter will share tools and practices for employment selection.

PARTNERSHIPS

Most supported employment organizations understand that the customers of their services are looking for the same general qualities in an employment situation as any person participating in the labor force. It will be important for these employment service organizations to: 1) facilitate the identification of multiple career options, 2) facilitate the identification of a geographic area for employment, and 3) assist with the employment selection process. Equally important is to draw upon strong organizational and personal values and goals to guide the employment selection process.

Vital to success will be customers and employment specialists developing relationships that are built upon trust and respect. Both need to clearly understand the ground rules, mission, goals, and constraints of their relationship. Typically, the ground rules and goals will be conveyed, by both parties, many times throughout the process. The following table shares some tips for employment specialists to assist in improving communication with supported employment customers during the employment selection process.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

1. Consider the customer as a person.
2. Make every effort to understand what the customer is really saying.
3. Take time to listen and do not assume you know what is being said.
4. Be open-minded when customers express career goals and job preferences.
5. Keep your expectations high.
6. Believe that the customer knows his or her own capabilities
7. Be encouraging and supportive

Ed Turner, 1996

There is a strong connection between the employment selection process and long term employment success. Customers and employment specialists must establish positive partnerships with joint accountability for the outcomes that are achieved. Together they must plan and implement strategies that facilitate the identification of employment opportunities that meet the customer's employment desires. The following table presents partnership issues that must be addressed during the employment selection process.

PARTNERSHIP ISSUES DIRECTING EMPLOYMENT SELECTION

A. Preferences
  - Interests
  - Wishes
  - Desires

B. Skills
  - Talents
  - Abilities
  - Education

C. Experiences
  - Employment
  - Volunteer/Training
  - Personal Development

D. Financial & Non-monetary Benefits
  - Wages
  - Health Insurance
  - Vacation/Holiday/Personal

E. Work Conditions
  - Hours/Schedule
  - Job Duties
  - Work Environment
  - Supervision

UTILIZING CUSTOMER PROFILE INFORMATION

Often individuals who are seeking employment assistance from supported employment organizations, are individuals with no previous work experience or history. When this occurs it is difficult to understand how a customer can be assisted in identifying a career or job. The number of occupations or careers to choose from can be mind boggling. According to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, customers have a choice of over 20,000 occupations or careers. Therefore, it should not be surprising that many individuals have no idea of a career goal when presented with the difficult question of selecting a career. However, there are many different tools and strategies that can be utilized to help with the employment selection process. During the customer profile phase, the employment specialist gathered information from a variety of sources that now must be throughly analyzed.

Career Goals

Chapter 3 discussed techniques for getting to know the customer and person-centered planning. These techniques will assist the employment specialist in developing a clear picture of an individual's wants, needs, and desires. It will be important to review these experiences and/or the plans that were developed as a result, to ensure that these data are guiding the employment selection process.

Situational Assessment

The situational assessment process, described in Chapter 3, provides the customer and employment specialist with information on occupational and environmental preferences. The data gained from this activity will provide information on a variety of environmental work factors to including noise, movement, people, space, and lighting. Situational assessment data will include information related to endurance, communication skills, general mobility, and orientation skills. This type of information can help the customer determine if he or she is interested in a particular career or occupation. The situational assessment is most beneficial when it is completed prior to embarking on a job search.

Informational Interviewing

Often service providers utilize situational assessment strategies in an attempt to identify areas of interest for the customer. Another strategy that the employment specialist and customer should consider is informational interviewing. When conducting an informational interview, the customer and/or family member should identify favorite skills, subjects, hobbies, and other areas of interest. Once this is completed, the customer and employment specialist should identify jobs which may give the individual a chance to use the skills she or he enjoys. Next, the customer and employment specialist should begin to identify organizations where this type of work is conducted. Finally, it is helpful to find workers performing the work that is identified as a possible area of interest and provide an opportunity for the customer and/or employment specialist to inter-view employees. Some of the questions that should be asked during this interview are listed here.

Question #1	How did you get into this type of work?
Question #2	What do you like most about your work?
Question #3	What do you like the least about your work?
Question # 4	Where else can I find people who do this same type of work?

Informational interviewing allows the customer to practice interviewing skills, explore career area interests, and become exposed to work expectations for a specific position. This process can be a very effective technique to assist the customer in determining career interests. Informational interviews can be a major focus of the job development process.

Formal Records

It may be helpful to review formal records that were analyzed during the customer profile process, as described in chapter 3. Reiewing medical records are of particular importance, especially for customers who are on medication. For example, a side effect of a particular medication may make an individual extremely sensitive to heat. This is a very important factor for job selection. In addition, academic, vocational, and psychosocial records can revel information that may have been overlooked. For example, these records could revel information regarding a person's memory that will be important in job selection.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

While the customer profile information is important, it is equally valuable to review community business opportunities, as described in Chapters 2 and 4 of this manual. This will give both the customer and employment specialist information for directing the employment selection process. Identifying key business organizations and targeted positions will be important to keep the employment selection process as efficient as possible.

Community Labor Market Screening

The customer and the employment specialist will need to review the information that was collected during the community labor market screening as described in Chapter 4 of this manual. The intent of the initial screening is to determine the general nature of the job market in the customer's community. Simply put, this allows the customer to become aware of careers and/or occupational options that are available to choose from within the targeted geographical area. In the past, this has typically been viewed as the responsibility of the supported employment provider. However, using a customer-driven approach the customer should be involved and assist with the analysis of community business opportunities.

Job Analysis

Chapter 4 of this manual presented the job analysis process as consisting of: 1) gathering general information about a business and a specific employer; 2) gathering information about the types of jobs available at the business; and 3) identifying specific job duties and skills related to a specific job. The information collected can be used by the customer to make decisions about a particular company and the jobs available within a business. All job analysis information should be carefully reviewed by both the employment specialist and the customer.

Job Restructuring

As presented in Chapter 4, there are some businesses, especially smaller companies, where work is distributed across employees by reviewing the work that needs to be accomplished, the employee that are available, and the skills that needed to complete the task (Hagner & Dileo, 1993). A job created for a specific individual is far more likely to meet an individual's needs. However, job restructuring holds many long term benefits for the business as well. The plan must hold benefits to both the potential employee as well as the employer.

The key to success with job restructuring is conducting an extensive job analysis. It will be up to the employment specialist and/or customer to present restructuring ideas to the employer (see Chapter 6). When conducting an analysis, it is helpful for the employment specialist to analyze the environment using the following process (Adapted from Hagner & Dileo, 1993; Ferrell, 1996).

ANALYZING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR JOB RESTRUCTURING

1. Listen to Employer Needs
2. Study Job Descriptions
3. Conduct Job Analysis
4. Observe Work Routines
5. Interview Employer
6. Interview Co-workers
7. Spend Time in Various Departments
8. Take Written Notes
9. Do a Work Culture Analysis
10. Determine Need(s)
11. Put Proposal Together
12. Discuss Proposal with Employer
13. Set Interview(s) or a Time for the Employer to Meet the Applicant

JOB OPENINGS

Using the results of the community labor market screening, contact employers who have career or occupational options that are in line with those of interest to the customer. A rule of thumb when searching for employment is to first contact employers who have job openings. Then contact employers identified through the community labor market screening.

Application

Frequently the customer will be required to complete an employment application for a position. The employment specialist should become familiar with the customer's work history and background experiences to provide assistance and/or support in filling out a job application. Each item on the application should be answered, in a thorough manner. Often job applicants who have not completed all items on the application form are screened out of a job interview. Assisting the customer with the preparation of a resume which projects the job seeker as serious and businesslike in the job search process will assist with the application process. The following table presents some important points to remember during the application process.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Gather necessary documentation and information (i.e. work history, education, address, phone number, social security number, letters of recommendation).

(continued)

2. Review and revise resume to reflect skills and experience related to the specific job being sought.

3. Schedule a time to pick up/fill out the application.

4. Schedule a time for an interview.

Gather Necessary Documentation and Information

Most of the information that will be important for completing a job application will be gathered during the initial phase of supported employment. It is important to re-view this information to be sure that it is current. The following table is a checklist of items that will be important for information gathering.

DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. work history
2. career/employment goal
3. education
4. address
5. phone number
6. Social Security number
7. picture identification
8. birth certificate
9. letters of recommendation

Review and Revise Resume. A resume should be a short account of the individual's qualifications and experiences. However, it is better to have too much information initially. The employment specialist and customer can then customize the job seeker's resume for a specific job. When reviewing and revising the functional resume it will be important to include areas presented below. The following table provides areas for analysis.

REVIEWING & REVISING THE RESUME FOR A SPECIFIC JOB

I. Career Objective

Does the job or career objective match the position?

Does the resume include why the job seeker wants the position?
- to learn new things
- to earn an income and be a productive citizen
- to help others
- to be part of a team

II. Education

Does the resume include all educational experiences?
- schools
- training centers
- college courses
- other courses (leisure, etc.)

Does the resume highlight areas of education specific to the position?

III. Skills

Does the resume include all important skill areas?
- household chores
- tasks performed at home
- task performed at school
- task performed at church or other community locations
- remedial task such as using the telephone or operating electrical appliances

Does the resume include skills that are specific to the job opening?

continued

IV. Experience

Does the resume include a comprehensive list of important experiences.
- school work experience assignments such as the cafeteria or office
- volunteer experiences
- community experiences such as: child care or lawn care

Does the resume have all updated information regarding work experiences?
- unpaid school experiences
- paid employment

V. Interests

Does the resume reflect job related areas of interest?
- hobbies
- music
- television: drama, mystery, comedy
- video games
- sports: list types
- animals
- gardening, flowers, plants
- talking to friends
- reading
- art

Does the resume tie these interest areas to the specific position?

VI. References

Does the resume include three personal references?
- someone that you have known for at least one year
- correct addresses
- telephone numbers

Have references been contacted for permission to use their name for the specific job opening?

JOB INTERVIEWING

Most applicants will have an interview as part of the hiring process. Interviews can be stressful situations. The interview process has three components that must be addressed:

Component #1 preparation for the interview,

Component #2 the interview, and

Component #3 following the interview.

Preparation for the Interview

In some instances, the supported employment customer will want to participate in the interview by herself or himself. In other situations the customer may want the employment specialist to attend. Either way, interviewing should be considered an opportunity for the employer to determine if he or she wants to hire the interviewee, and an opportunity to for the interviewee to determine "Do I want to work here?".

Applicants may require preparation for the interview. The customer and the employment specialist will need to review and determine: 1) The purpose of the interview, 2) Who will attend, 3) How they will get to and from the interview, 4) What the employer will want to know, 5) How to present the customer's experience and qualifications, 6)What the applicant will want to ask, and 7) How to act in a businesslike manner.

The Interview

The job interview should be viewed as a chance to gather further information about the organization, the employer, and work environment. It will be an opportunity for the employer and job seeker to answer several important questions. The following table presents a list of questions that employers are attempting to answer during the interview process.

EMPLOYER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why does the applicant want to work here?
- What can this applicant do for our business?
- What kind of person is this applicant?
- Why should I hire this person?

In addition, the job seeker must approach this situation as an opportunity to gain a better picture of the actual job opening. The job seeker will want to obtain answers to the questions in the table below.

JOB SEEKER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Do I want to work for this employer?
- Do I like this work environment?
- How does this employer treat employees?
- Will this job offer wages and benefits that match my needs?

Sometimes, interviews are part of a decision making process (the employer is interviewing multiple candidates for the position) and other times it is a formality (the applicant will be hired; however, the employer wants to meet and discuss the job with them). In some situations the applicant and/or the employer may prefer that the interview be attended by the applicant only. In other situations, the applicant and/or the employer may want the employment specialist to participate.

Job Interview Case Study

Due to the severity of Mark's disability, the employment specialist and Mark decided that he would not be able to answer typical interview questions. The employment specialist prepared the employer for this by explaining Mark's method of communication. (e.g., He speaks in one to three word phrases. It is helpful to ask questions that require a "yes" or "no" response. If he is unsure of what you may be talking about, he may make a comment that is completely unrelated to the conversation.)

Mark's employment specialist accompanied him to the interview and assisted him throughout the process. Even though the employment specialist knew that Mark would not be able to answer many of the employer's questions, it was critical that he participate in the job interview process and to visit the potential site. During the interview the employment specialist was able to observe Mark's reactions to the employer, work environment, and potential job duties. Mark got very excited during the meeting and made many comments about things he saw in the hotel environment (e.g., radio, door, car). When the manager asked him if he wanted to work, Mark enthusiastically said "yes" and repeatedly asked the manager "work?" throughout the interview.

Following the Interview

The applicant will want to set himself or herself apart from other applicants. After the interview, the customer (with the support and/or assistance of the employment specialist) should write a brief note to the employer (the person they interviewed with). The note should have something positive about the interview process and/or treatment. In addition, a note can be an opportunity to add anything that may have been addressed at the interview.

NEGOTIATE EMPLOYMENT TERMS

At the point in time when an employer makes an offer of employment to an individual, he or she must make a decision on whether or not to accept the employment option. The employment specialist should assist the customer with this process. The decision should be based on the analysis of facts, knowledge, and data collected regarding the business and the specific job compared to the career and/or occupational goal identified by the customer. In essence, the task is to identify the consequences related to accepting or rejecting the position. The customer, with the support of the employment specialist, will need to determine the answers to several important questions:

EMPLOYMENT DECISION FACTORS

1. Do I want to work for this employer?
2. Do I want to be employed in this work environment?
3. Should I work full or part time?
4. Will my wages & benefits be sufficient?
5. How will my social security benefits be affected?
6. Will I have transportation to and from my job?

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF WORK

There are several activities that need to be coordinated by the employment specialist prior to a customer's first day of work. These activities are either directly or indirectly related to the new employee's job, his or her financial status, or work incentives for the business. Although some duties can be completed once the new employee begins work, it is imperative that the employment specialist ensures that the forms required by the business are completed, arrangements are made for transportation, and if appropriate, the Work Opportunity Credit Pre-screening Notice and Certification Request is completed and signed on or before the day the job is offered. The following table presents several common activities that need to be completed with an explanation of each activity ([illegible], Inge and Brooke, 1997).

ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT

Business Forms
- Complete job application
- Sign policy on company rules and conduct
- Complete state and federal tax withholding forms
- Sign for receipt of uniforms

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Job applicant furnishes information to the employer
- Employer determines if applicant is a member of the target group
- Employer completes the form
- Submit form no later than 21 days after job applicant begins work

Transportation
- Review transportation possibilities
- Identify the best option
- Arrange transportation schedule
- Develop program for instruction

Social Security Notification (SS)
- Write letter to Social Security: job information (SSA); include start date, position, hours and wages.
- Submit letter signed by SS recipient and/or family member allowing SSA to release SS information to the employment specialist.

Social Security Work Incentives
- Receive SSA Work Incentive Red Book
- Contact SSA to determine Earned Income Exclusion
- Calculate Trial Work Period if SSDI recipient
- Be aware of Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)
- Determine if new employee could benefit from a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)

continued

- Determine if new employee could benefit from an Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE).
- Complete paperwork for using SSA's Work Incentives

Employee Information
- Calculate potential changes in SSA benefits.
- Determine if budgeting assistance is needed using new income & SSA benefits.
- Review all paperwork related to Work Incentives.
- Review work progress data with employee and parent.

Agency Information
- Have employee/legal guardian sign release of information forms.
- Contact appropriate organizational members.
- Activities to Be Completed Prior to Employment

Case Study for Beginning a New Job

Submit Work Opportunity Credit Pre-screening Notice & Certification Request Form (WOTC). The WOTC, which replaces the Targeted Tax Credit (TJTC), provides a tax credit for employers who hire targeted groups including vocational rehabilitation referrals, qualified Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), veterans, ex-felons, food stamp recipients, and summer youth employees. The WOTC is elective, the employer can determine if they want their business to participate. Employers who choose to use the WOTC, must determine the applicant's eligibility by including the WOTC Pre-screening Notice and Certification request. In Mark's case, the employment specialist, with Mark's approval, informed the employer that Mark was referred by the sate vocational rehabilitation agency and therefore was eligible for for the tax credit. The employer was not aware of the WOTC program and requested more information. Mark's employment specialist provided the employer with a copy of the WOTC Pre-screening Notice and Certification request Form (IRS Form 8850), the accompanying general instructions for completion, and provided the employer with an explanation of the program.

The employment specialist explained that employers electing to use the WOTC may claim a credit of 35% of the first $6,000 of wages paid to an employee during the first 12 months of employment. The maximum tax credit is $2,100. For a qualified summer youth employee, an employer may take into account the first $3,000 of wages for up to 90 days. The maximum credit for a qualified summer youth is $1,050. Qualified employees must work for the employer for at least 180 days (20 days in the case of summer youth); or 400 hours (120 hours for summer youth). If a worker is employed less than the minimum required time, the employer cannot claim a credit. The Pre-screening Notice must be signed by the employer and employee on or before the day employment if offered. The completed form should be mailed to the State Employment Security Agency within 21 days. This agency will certify an individual's program eligibility for WOTC, and notify the employer, in writing, for tax credit filling purposes.

The Pre-screening Notice must contain information that the employee provides to the employer. This information forms the basis of the employer's belief that the new employee is in the eligible target group. In Mark's case this was not a question because he was being served by the state vocational rehabilitation agency. The employer and Mark (the new employee) signed the completed WOTC Notice and Certification Request Form. The employment specialist provided the employer with an addressed stamped envelope to mail the important paper work. The employer asked the employment specialist to make sure the document was mailed. Mark's employment specialist immediately mailed the form to her contact at the Virginia Employment Commission.

Completed Form Required by the Business. A job application had been submitted for Mark when the employment specialist initially met with the manager, however, the hotel required each of its employees to complete various other forms. All employees were required to sign a form indicating that they had read and understood the employee rules of conduct. Since Mark was unable to understand or remember the rules, the form was signed by Mark, his mother, and the employment specialist, indicating a joint responsibility for making sure Mark adhered to the rules.

Each employee also was required to complete state and federal tax withholding forms. Mark's mother completed these forms with the help of the employment specialist, and co-signed her name with Mark, since she was the legal guardian and responsible for filing his taxes. The final document required by the business consisted of a form indicating that Mark had received a hotel uniform and was responsible for returning it at the completion of his employment. This form, again, was jointly signed by Mark, his mother, and the employment specialist.

Arrange for Transportation. Since Mark's mother had indicated that she would not be able to transport Mark to or from work, other arrangements needed to be made. The best, most reliable option was to use STAR, the specialized transportation service for people with disabilities in his county. Unfortunately, when the employment specialist called, STAR was booked with reservations during the times that Mark needed transportation. It was anticipated that openings would become available within the next month, so the job coach was advised to check on a weekly basis. In the meantime, the job coach would transport Mark to work each morning in her car, and the school would send a bus to pick him up. His schedule was coordinated with the existing bus run that picked up students from the school who were participating in community-based instruction. Mark's mother signed a permission form that allowed the job coach to transport Mark to work in her personal vehicle, as well as, one that allowed the school to transport him from work to school at the end of his shift. Since Mark finished work at 11:00 a.m., he returned to school until dismissal at 2:00 p.m.

Notify the Social Security Office of Employment. The Social Security Office must be notified in writing each time a person starts working, stops working, or when there is a change in their monthly work earnings. These changes affect the amount of Social Security Income (SSI) an individual receives each month. They may also effect a person's eligibility to receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). Mark and his employment specialist used a form provided by the social security office to report his changes. She also submitted an "Authorization for Release of Information from the Social Security Administration", signed by Mark and his mother, so that she would have permission to talk directly with a social security representative about Mark's case.

Determine Appropriate Use of Social Security Work Incentives. One of the greatest fears many individuals with disabilities and their parents have is that they will lose their monthly SSI and/or SSDI checks, as well as their Medicare/Medicaid coverage, if the individual with a disability goes to work. This does not need to happen. The Social Security Administration provides several work incentives for SSI and SSDI recipients which can help them to keep their benefits while they work. Some of the work incentives apply to both SSI and SSDI, while others are specific to only one of the programs (SSI or SSDI). These work incentives are described below.

All individuals who receive SSI qualify for an **Earned Income Exclusion**. This incentive allows most recipients to keep a portion of their original monthly SSI benefit even after they start working. The amount of SSI they receive depends on the amount of money they earn and whether they qualify for any other work incentives. Once the Social Security Office is notified of employment, the Earned Income Exclusion is automatically calculated when determining the recipient's new SSI benefit. It is not necessary to submit any additional paperwork to claim an earned income exclusion.

A special work incentive is also available for youth under age 22 who are employed while they are still enrolled in school. The **Student Earned Income Exclusion** allows an SSI recipient to exclude up to $400 of earned income a month, with a maximum of $1,620 a year. Like the Earned Income Exclusion, this work incentive helps an employee retain more of their original SSI check. This work incentive should also be automatically calculated by the Social Security Office.

SSI recipients who need additional financial resources in order to help them get or maintain employment may submit a **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)** (O'Mara, 1991; O'Mara, 1989). This work incentive enables an individual to set aside a portion of their earned income or unearned income (i.e. SSDI) in order to pay for services that will help them achieve their employment goal. A PASS can be written to cover almost anything that is determined work related. Some examples include specialized transportation, attendant care, uniforms, job coach services, and safety equipment. A PASS may be written at any time during a person's employment if it is a means for achieving self support. The Social Security Office suggests using the format in the following table when submitting a PASS.

PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT

1. Name.
2. Social Security Number.
3. Date that the plan will begin.
4. List of expenses to meet work goal.
5. Amount of income that will be used to reach work goal.
6. Name of bank where savings will be kept.
7. Status of savings toward work goal.
8. Persons who will help in obtaining work goal.
9. Signature.
10. Date.

Individuals who receive SSDI will be effected by an incentive known as the Trial Work Period. Unlike SSI, where a person's benefits are decreased based on the amount of money they earn, SSDI recipients must be re-evaluated for SSDI eligibility following a nine month Trial Work Period. At the conclusion of the Trial Work Period, the case is reviewed to determine whether the person has reached "substantial gainful activity" (SGA). Cash benefits are terminated for all individuals who consistently earn more than SGA, however those individuals whose monthly earnings do not reach SGA continue to receive their full SSDI benefit.

Employees who are determined ineligible for SSDI following their nine month Trial Work Period qualify for an **Extended Period of Eligibility**. This work incentive provides SSDI cash benefits to individuals during any months that they do not reach substantial gainful activity. The Extended Period of Eligibility is available for 36 months following the nine month Trial Work Period. In order to receive benefits during the extended period, the employee or job coach should notify the person's Social Security representative.

One of the main work incentives that can assist individuals receiving SSI, SSDI, or both, is the **Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)**. An IRWE allows a person to deduct the cost of work-related expenses from their earnings before calculations are made to determine their SSI and/or SSDI benefit. In the case of SSI, filing an IRWE helps an individual retain more of their original SSI check. For SSDI recipients, an IRWE may help an employee keep their cash benefits. Since the cost of an impairment-related work expense is deducted from the person's monthly earnings before SSDI eligibility is considered, using an IRWE may reduce an employee's earnings below the substantial gainful activity level and allow him/her to keep his/her benefit.

An IRWE must be work expenses directly related to an individual's disability and paid for by the individual. The expense must be paid within the month the individual is working and not reimbursed by another source. An IRWE is not a written plan, it is a monthly report of expenditures used by the Social Security representative to calculate total countable income and determine continued eligibility or the amount of monthly cash payments. The Social Security Administration must have proof for every IRWE claimed by the worker with a disability. This includes: 1) name and address of prescribing source (doctor, VR counselor), 2) impairment for which it is prescribed, and 3) receipts and canceled checks. Some of the expenses that may be reimbursed using an IRWE are presented in the following table.

IMPAIRMENT-RELATED WORK EXPENSES

1. **Attendant care** services: assistance in getting ready for work, going to and from work, a reader for the blind, an interpreter for the deaf, etc.
2. **Medical** devices: wheelchair, dialysis equipment, respirators, pacemakers, pacers, etc.
3. **Prosthesis:** artificial arm, hip, or leg.
4. **Work-related equipment:** special typewriter, telecommunication devices, specially modified tools, braille devices, electronic visual aids, etc.
5. **Residential modifications:** ramps, railings, doorways to get to and from work, work space in home for self-employment at home.
6. **Drugs and Medical Services:** physical therapy, chemotherapy, anticonvulsant and antidepressant drugs, etc. (if regularly prescribed and necessary for controlling disabling conditions).
7. **Medical Supplies:** catheters, face masks, bandages, elastic stockings, etc.
8. **Guide Dog:** food and vet bills, etc.
9. **Transportation Cost:** modification of vehicles, special transportation.

Keep New Employee and Family Members Informed about Changes in Social Security Using the Benefits Analysis Form. Once information has been filed with the Social Security Office regarding a person's employment, it may take as long as two or three months before any changes are made in the employee's SSI check. After the changes are processed, the person will experience a substantial decrease in SSI to make up for the first few months that deductions were not made. Eventually, the SSI payment amount will even out to a predictable amount.

Many families depend on the money their child receives from SSI and may experience significant financial difficulty when the check is initially decreased. It is possible to prepare families for these changes by calculating the amount of SSI they can expect to receive when their child starts working. Once the amount is known, families can save the additional money they receive during the first couple of months (before the check is adjusted) and apply it to the month(s) when the check is initially decreased.

Keep Adult Service Agencies Informed. Mark's case manager was notified about his employment soon after he was offered the job. The case manager arranged to take Mark's mom over to see where he would be working, since she was not familiar with the hotel's location. The case manager also assisted the employment specialist by helping Mark's mother set aside money from his SSI checks during the first months of employment.

In addition, the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) was also contacted. A follow-up letter was sent to DRS counselor informing him of Mark's employment start date and a projection of how long initial training would take.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There are many questions that arise during the employment selection process. This chapter has attempted to answer several of the process issues and concerns. The following section presents some of the most frequently asked employment selection questions and answers.

1. **What is meant by qualified applicant?**
   ANSWER: This means the applicant must satisfy the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, employment experience, skills, or licenses. The applicant must be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. An employer cannot refuse to hire an applicant because of a disability prevents the applicant from performing duties that are not essential to the job.
2. **Should a disability be disclosed?**
   ANSWER: The ADA prohibits employers from making any inquiries as to the existence or nature of a disability prior to an offer of employment. Employers are not allowed to ask if an applicant has any disabilities or impairments which may affect their performance in the position for which a job application has been submitted. It is important to take the time to discuss with the customer what she or he approves and disapproves of disclosing during employer marketing activities. Applicants can voluntarily disclose a disability to an employer. Once an applicant discloses her or his disability, the employer can follow-up with questions such as how the applicant would perform a specific job function.
3. **What is a reasonable accommodation?**
   ANSWER: A reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a qualified applicant to participate in the job application process, to perform essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations can include a large variety of arrangements and supports. The following table list possible reasonable accommodations examples.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- providing or modifying equipment or devices
- job restructuring
- part-time or modified work schedules
- reassignment to a vacant position
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies
- providing readers and interpreters
- making the workplace readily accessible

4. **Should a reasonable accommodations be requested during the interview process?**
ANSWER: Employers may ask about an applicant's ability to perform job-related functions and the need for reasonable accommodations. After an applicant has reviewed the position description and position requirements, it is permissible for the employer to inquire if the applicant is able to perform these tasks with or without an accommodation. If the applicant indicates he or she is able to perform the task with an accommodation, the employer may ask how it would be accomplished.

5. **Can the employer require a medical examination as a condition for employment?**
ANSWER: After a conditional job offer is made, an employer may require medical exams and make disability related inquiries if this is done for all entering employees in that job category. However, the employer can not reject an applicant because of information about their disability revealed by the medical examination, unless the reasons for rejection are job-related and necessary for the conduct of the employer's business. Drug testing is not affected.

6. **Who will provide reasonable accommodations?**
ANSWER: Employers must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees, unless undue hardship would result. If an applicant needs and/or wants a reasonable accommodation she or he must request it from the employer; however, the applicant is not required to identify a disability. Therefore, the focus of the conversation should center on job functions which need an accommodation to complete the task. The applicant should be prepared to identify the specific accommodation that is needed.

7. **What happens if after a few days I don't like the job?**
ANSWER: The goal of employment is to locate a work environment that is satisfactory to the job seekers needs and desires. The new employee should discuss her or his dissatisfaction with the employment specialist and employer. In some instances, discussions with the employer can result in changes, such as job restructuring. It is also permissible to resign a position. However, the old adage, "the best time to look for a new job is while you are employed," is good advice. If a new employee wants a job change the employment specialist should work with the customer to establish a course of action for career development.

8. **What if the employer decides to terminate an employee?**
ANSWER: The employer can not fire an employee because of a disability. However, if the individual is not performing the essential duties of the job to the employer's standards, the employer may terminate his or her employee. Employers will fire employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other employees in the workplace. In addition, employees who use illegal drugs are not protected from personnel actions based on their use of illegal drugs.

SUMMARY

Quality supported employment service providers recognize that customers of supported employment services may need to take several jobs before settling on a particular company or career. When an employment situation does not work out, the customer and the employment specialist must sit down to determine what has been learned from the situation. It will be important to use this information to help develop a plan of action for meeting career goals and securing a new job.

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Job-Site Training

The use of instructional strategies for training individuals on supported employment job sites has been well documented. Specific strategies have included the use of job duty and task analyses, natural supports, natural cues, compensatory strategies, prompting procedures, reinforcers, and self-management procedures (e.g., self-reinforcement, self-monitoring), and so forth, to mention a few. However, critics of providing instruction at customers' job sites have argued that training by an employment specialist draws attention to the customers and isolates them from co-workers and supervisors.

Well-designed instructional programs which are customer-driven do not segregate individuals with disabilities. Rather, poor practices isolate customers on job sites. Employment specialists must have knowledge of training strategies, the customer's support needs, employer's support needs, and the demands of the workplace in order to select the least intrusive method for providing support. This chapter will present a variety of these strategies and discuss facilitating customer independence in the workplace.

JOB DUTY AND TASK ANALYSES

Before the customer begins working, the employment specialist must analyze the job and organize the daily routine. This analysis includes identifying the areas in which various job tasks are performed, determining the essential and non-essential job functions, establishing a work routine, identifying natural supports and natural cues in the workplace, and designing appropriate training and support strategies. Usually, working one shift prior to introducing the customer to the position will be sufficient for completing these activities.

Working the job gives the employment specialist the opportunity to note the major job duties and estimate the amount of time required for task completion. The sequence of job duties form can be used to record this information, including the movement required between work stations. If the sequence of job duties varies from day to day, this also is noted on the form. An example of a completed Sequence of Job Duties Form is found on the following page.

Sequence of Job Duties Form

Position: Stock clerk

Job Site: J.C. Penney's

☒ Job duties remain the same

☐ Job duties vary from day to day
(If checked, complete a separate form for each different sequence; circle day for which this form is completed)

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat Sun

Approximate Times	Job Duty
11:00 to 11:05	Punch in
11:05 to 11:15	Meet w/ supervisor and set up work area
11:15 to 11:30	Price gift merchandise
11:30 to 11:45	Move priced merchandise to stock area
11:45 to 1:00	Set up work area w/ clothing for pricing
1:00 to 1:15	Break
1:15 to 3:00	Price clothing
3:00 to 4:00	Move clothing to department
4:00 to 4:15	Clean up work area & put hangers
4:15 to 5:00	Punch out

Comments:

Signature: ____________________

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Job Duty Analysis

Once the sequence of major job duties has been determined, the next step is to analyze the skills required to perform each major duty. During this step, the employment specialist identifies and describes the skills, tools, and equipment that are needed. Information may be obtained from interviews conducted with the employer, co-workers, and supervisors, observing co-workers perform the skills, and/or personally completing the job duties. Typically, each duty in the sequence of job duties will have several associated skills. In the above example, setting up the work area at Ronny's included several tasks. They are listed below.

JOB DUTY: Setting Up the Work Station

- Locates stools for pinning
- Opens and empties boxes
- Obtains inventory sheets and day's price tickets from supervisor
- Locates and adjusts equipment: price gun, stretch, and inventory stamp

During this stage of analysis, the employment specialist should concentrate first on the job duty, and how it is performed by the co-worker(s). Once this has been established, he/she can consider how the task can be supported or modified specific to the worker who will master it. The following suggestions have proven useful in completing a job duty analysis.

GUIDELINES FOR A JOB DUTY ANALYSIS

1) Interview the employer/supervisor for further input.
2) Observe a co-worker completing the job duty.
3) Identify the skills that must be completed successfully to perform the job duty.
4) Identify all tools and machinery that are required. Consider any modifications or accommodations that may be needed to this equipment.
5) Determine the most efficient procedure to complete each skill.
6) Try to determine or reduce unnecessary steps/movements when completing the job duty analysis.
7) If changes are made to the "usual way of doing business", be sure to clear the modifications with the employer and/or supervisor.

[illegible]

Task Analyzing Job Duties

At this point, the employment specialist has identified the specific major job duties, the time of day when these duties occur, the specific skills associated with each duty, and any needed supplies and tools. Next, the employment specialist must develop a written task analysis for each skill that the consumer will be performing. Steps in a task analysis should be stated in terms of observable behaviors with each step representing one "behavior." Once the step is complete, a visible change in the task or process occurs.

Wording steps in the form of a verbal cue (e.g., Push the "off" button) allows the employment specialist to use the steps of the task analysis as verbal prompts during instruction. The following list of tips are offered as guidelines for writing a task analysis:

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A TASK ANALYSIS

1. State steps in terms of observable behaviors.
2. Write steps in adequate detail with only one behavior per step.
3. Test the task analysis to ensure that each step results in a visible change in the task in process.
4. Order steps from first to last.
5. Word steps as verbal cues.
6. Build natural cues and compensatory strategies into the task analysis.
7. Consider efficiency: use both hands with the least amount of movement.
8. Overcome discrimination by building judgement into the task (e.g., [illegible] [illegible] to a pattern results in a [illegible] [illegible] or [illegible] to discriminate where the [illegible] is [illegible]).

(Moon et al., 1990)

Case Study Example

John and the employment specialist identified a job as a maintenance assistant at the local mall. The actual job duties included cleaning the restrooms and entrance areas of the mall prior to the opening of business each day, Monday through Friday. This job was created for John based on his specific abilities and interests. After completing several situational assessments (e.g., food service, janitorial, and laundry work), John and the employment specialist identified the following interests and support needs:

1. John preferred a job where he could be mobile. He became quickly bored if he had to remain in one place.
2. John liked quiet spaces.
3. John needed a work environment where he could sing and make noise.
4. John performed janitorial tasks in [illegible] work or laundry work (as noted by the amount of time he stayed engaged in the tasks without assistance).

The employment specialist contacted the personnel department of the mall and met with the manager to discuss possible job duties that John might like. The manager identified that the maintenance crew was not keeping up with cleaning the entrance areas to the mall and the restrooms. He agreed to hire John part-time to complete these job duties.

The employment specialist visited the job for one day prior to John's first day of employment and developed a job duty analysis and task analysis. She talked with the supervisor and then observed the co-workers perform their job duties. Then she [illegible] one day [illegible] performing the mall entrance cleaning, the [illegible] time cleaning the restrooms, and [illegible] to the mall to develop her task analyses. The following job duty sequence was developed:

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. [illegible]
6. [illegible]
7. [illegible]
8. [illegible]

9. Brush front of toilet
10. Dip brush in bucket
11. Tap brush
12. Brush lid of toilet
13. Raise lid and brush
14. Brush inside of toilet
15. Dip brush in bucket
16. Tap brush
17. Lower lid of toilet
18. Brush outside of toilet bowl
19. Put brush in bucket
20. Get cleanser
21. Go to next toilet

However, when the employment specialist observed John doing the task, she noted that he spent too much time on several steps. For instance, instead of quickly tapping the brush on the side of the bucket, John perseverated on the step. The employment specialist decided to modify the task and teach John a pattern for cleaning the toilet. For instance, step 6, *tap the brush*, was changed to read, *tap the brush 3 x's*. John learned to count to three as a reminder for him to move on to the next step of the task analysis.

Another step that John had difficulty completing was step eight, *brush the top of toilet*. John could not discriminate clean vs. dirty surfaces, and he seemed to have no concept of when he should stop wiping the top of the toilet. Therefore, this step of the task was further broken down into smaller steps for instruction. In addition, other steps were analyzed further into component steps to assist John in learning the task and developing a pattern for completing the job duty. A sample step in John's task analysis follows.

Step 8 of Cleaning the Toilet:

Brush top of toilet. (Customer wipes top one time, always working left to right.)

- Place brush at back corner.
- Move brush across top of toilet.
- Place brush at front corner.
- Move brush across top.

The information placed in parentheses served as a cue to the trainer for consistency of prompting. By adding this comment, the employment specialist could ensure that other trainers who substituted would prompt this step in the same way. However, she did not want to add it to the verbal cues, since she wanted these to remain short.

This example demonstrates how the employment specialist can first develop a task analysis based on the general requirements of the job. Once the customer begins working, this analysis can be modified based on the specific abilities and training needs of the individual worker. Remember, always check any changes to the job duty or task analyses with the employer and/or supervisor prior to implementation.

Summary: Developing a job duty analysis and a tasks analysis of each skill serves as the foundation for job-site training. Once this is accomplished, the customer and employment specialist can determine which skills the customer knows how to perform and which will require further instruction. In addition, this analysis will afford the employment specialist the opportunity to analyze the worksite and identify the natural cues and supports that are [illegible]able to the customer.

NATURAL SUPPORTS

Often, the success of a supported employment customer will be determined by the support of the co-workers in the workplace. If the customer is perceived as reliable, cooperative, and competent from the first day of employment, the chances for long-term job retention are increased. Therefore, the first step in job-site training is to identify the natural supports that are available in the workplace.

The use of the word *natural* implies that the supports are ones that are *typically* available to all workers in the workplace. They are not artificially contrived by the employment specialist. As such, natural supports can be referred to as **workplace supports** which are naturally occurring on the job site. Workplace supports may include but are not limited to such things as a co-worker mentor who assists an employee in learning the job, a supervisor who monitors work performance, a co-worker who assists the customer in developing social relationships, orientation training or other company sponsored training events, an employee assistance program, and so forth.

The employment specialist should not assume that workplace supports will be available automatically to the new employee. Even if a resource exists, the supported employment customer may not know how to access or benefit from its use. He/she may be unaware of the potential support, how to choose among the support alternatives, or how to access a desired resource (Inge, 1994).

The role of the employment specialist is to assist the customer in identifying and reviewing the variety of supports available and in selecting the ones that meet his/her needs. A company may have varying levels of these resource options. For instance, one company may have an intensive orientation and training program while another has none. In addition, the support must be analyzed to determine if it meets the needs of the customer. A one time, two-hour lecture on company policies may be of little benefit to the customer, while a co-worker who explains the "unwritten rules" of the workplace to all new employees may be an extremely valuable resource.

The employment specialist should not expect that employers and co-workers automatically will provide "natural supports" to a customer. Some individuals initially may feel uncomfortable providing instruction and supervision to a worker with a disability. The employment specialist can model appropriate social interactions and training techniques that will assist coworkers and supervisors to become proficient in assisting the supported employment customer. This can be as subtle as encouraging coworkers to direct questions and conversation to the individual rather than to the employment specialist from the first day of training. Another example may be the employment specialist who assists the customer in learning the names of his/her coworkers as quickly as possible.

Whenever identifying and using workplace supports, the employment specialist also needs to determine if he/she is creating an unnecessary dependence on co-workers. For instance, a co-worker could be asked to assist the customer in setting up his/her work supplies everyday or in completing other portions of work tasks that he/she finds difficult. However, training by an employment specialist which assists the customer in working independently may be the least intrusive strategy.

If training by the employment specialist is the selected option, he/she continually must evaluate the assistance that is provided during job-site training. Something as simple as where the employment specialist stands during instruction can create dependence on the trainer and place a barrier between the customer and co-workers. The following section on questions and answers offers some points to consider when facilitating workplace supports.

Considerations for the Identification and Selection of Natural Supports

1. What are the possible workplace support resources? There could be many different ways to approach the same support need such as: a) using a co-worker mentor to assist the customer in responding to a natural cue to increase his/her production; b) asking a supervisor to assist the customer in monitoring his/her work production; or c) having an employment specialist train the customer to monitor his/her production using a self-management program. The employment specialist should identify and review all the different support strategies and options with the customer, employer, and co-workers.

2. Which strategies match the learning style or needs of the customer? While there may be many support options available in the workplace, a customer will respond to any particular choice based on his/her learning style. Some individuals may respond better to verbal instructions, while others need detailed demonstrations and repeated practice to learn a new job duty. For instance, a supervisor may be willing to provide support to a customer by monitoring his/her work performance at set intervals of time. However, if the customer does not respond to the verbal instructions offered by the supervisor, there is a gap between the support provided and the support needed.

In this example, the employment specialist can work with the employer and customer to determine if the supervisor needs information on how to support the customer. Or, they may decide that the customer prefers for the employment specialist to assist him/her in learning the task. If this is the selected option, the employment specialist must be conscious of fading support to the naturally occurring supervision available from the employer.

3. What are the customer's, employer's, co-worker's choices? The employment specialist should not assume that workplace supports will be provided by the employer or co-workers for all of the customer's needs. The employer's and/or co-workers' level of comfort with supplying the identified support should be determined. Does the customer want a co-worker assisting with this support need? How do the co-workers feel about

providing the assistance? Does the employer feel that this is a reasonable accommodation or should other support options be explored? This may be a particularly sensitive issue for discussions related to the personal care needs of customers with physical disabilities.

For instance, a customer may be hesitant to ask a stranger for personal care support such as eating, and co-workers may also feel uncomfortable providing the support. However, as relationships develop in the workplace, this assistance may evolve naturally. Initially, the employment specialist can facilitate this by asking co-workers to eat lunch with the customer and modeling how to provide assistance. Other customers facing the same situation may choose to hire a personal assistant to provide support while still others may choose to forgo eating during work hours.

6. Which support option results in or promotes customer independence? Would this strategy result in dependence on co-workers when independence could be achieved by the customer? Clearly, dependence on co-workers to provide support to the customer may be as intrusive as creating dependence on the employment specialist. Situations may occur when co-workers are not available to assist the customer with an identified support need.

For instance, one customer was having difficulty punching in at the beginning and end of his work shift. He was unable to select his time card, since he could not recognize or remember his Social Security number. The employment specialist decided that a co-worker should be assigned to assist the individual in locating the card and punching in or out. Although the employer was willing to provide the support, this particular idea creates dependence on the customer's co-workers.

A color cue added to the timecard may result in the customer learning to select it independently, or he may learn to place the card in a particular location that would not require identification of the Social Security number. While every worker needs to rely on co-workers for assistance or support, employment specialists should not create situations that perpetuate learned helplessness. In this instance, the co-worker might assist by placing the color cue on the card, or by checking to see that the customer successfully keeps it in the specified location. The customer would have responsibility for independently completing the task while receiving support from co-workers.

Initially, identifying and discussing the various support options with the customer, employers, and co-workers is the employment specialist's role during job-site training. Gradually, co-workers and supervisors can assume this responsibility as the employment specialist transfers his/her support to the resources naturally occurring in the workplace. In most instances, a combination of strategies will be selected to promote customer success. This combination of supports may include natural supports from co-workers, natural cues, compensatory strategies, as well as instruction from the employment specialist and/or co-workers. Determining which combination will promote independence while gradually fading the employment specialist's support to the co-workers is the key to long term employment for supported employment customers. The remaining sections of this chapter will discuss job-site training strategies and how to put them all together to facilitate employment success.

NATURAL CUES

A natural cue represents some feature of the work environment, job tasks, or activities which signals an employee what to do next. Typically, a natural cue is one that the customer can see, hear, touch/feel, or smell and has not been changed or added to the worksite by the employment specialist. Examples may include the color of a cleaning supply, an on/off indicator light, a buzzer on the service door, the telephone ringing, announcements over a loud speaker, the "body language" of a co-worker, and the placement or location of work materials (e.g., mail in an "in" box, dirty dishes on an unoccupied table, etc.).

When a natural cue is present or occurs during the customer's work routine, he/she will either attend to the cue and respond correctly, not attend to the cue at all, or respond incorrectly. For instance, a customer may respond to the buzzer on the service door by opening it for the delivery person (the correct action); he/she may ignore the buzzer and continue pricing merchandise (no response); or he/she may go ask another worker to open the door (incorrect response).

Obviously, if the customer attends to and responds to a natural cue, instruction is not required. However, some workers must learn to recognize and attend to these cues. The employment specialist should work with the customer, the employer, and co-workers to identify the natural cues in the workplace which can assist the individual in completing his or her tasks successfully. Often, the co-workers and supervisor can be the most valuable source for this information.

For instance, a customer who worked at a hotel could not discriminate between the shoe shine cloth and shower cap packages. The items came in identical cardboard packets except for a very small label telling the contents. The customer needed to look on the counter in the bathroom and determine which items were missing and replace the correct toiletries. (Note that absence of an item on the counter was the first natural cue which signaled the customer that an item needed replacing.)

Since the customer could not read, she couldn't look at the two packages and tell which one was which without opening them. The customer's co-worker offered the perfect solution to this situation when asked for assistance. She told the employment specialist that she never read the labels on the packets. Instead, she picked up a package and squeezed it: the shower cap made a "crinkling" noise while the shoe shine cloth was soft. The natural physical characteristics of the items told her which was which (Personal Communication, Theresa Southerland, August 6, 1996).

Adding an Extra Cue to the Natural Cue

Some customers still may fail to respond or recognize a cue even after it is pointed out to them. One way to call attention to the cue may be to initially add an extra or artificial cue to the natural one. This extra cue can enhance the relevant features of the naturally occurring one. For example, a customer who was responsible for filling a condiment bar on an "as needed" basis did not respond to the naturally occurring cue of the empty bins. A piece of colored tape was placed on the inside of the bins to signal the customer that a bin needed filling. The tape highlighted the relevant feature of the work task, the empty bin, to which the customer was not responding.

Whenever extra cues are added to the work environment or work tasks, the employment specialist needs to consider fading them as the customer begins to notice the naturally occurring ones. In the bin example, the co-workers or employment specialist may initially place a wide strip of colored tape all around the inside of the bin. This could be faded in the following way:

FADING AN ADDED CUE

- Place a 2" wide strip of red tape around the inside of the bin.
- Decrease to a 1" wide strip of red tape around the inside of the bin.
- Change to red dots placed ½" apart around the inside of the bin.
- Fade to red dots placed 2" apart around the inside of the bin.
- Continue fading the distance between dots and/or the size of the dots until the customer responds to the empty bin.

The speed of fading should be based on the worker's ability to continue responding as the extra cue is faded. Remember to include the customer, co-workers, and supervisor in discussions on adding extra cues to the work environment. This will ensure ownership of the strategy by all individuals involved as well as guarantee that changes are not made that the supervisor would not approve.

In fact, the supervisor or co-workers should be approached about assisting the customer with the extra cue. The supervisor or a co-worker may volunteer to check that added cues are not removed by other employees who are unfamiliar with the customer's training program, and so forth. In fact, co-workers often discover that cues added for the supported employment customer are beneficial to them in performing their work tasks. As they assist the customer with his/her cues, they may begin to assist with identifying other supports. This shifting of responsibility from the employment specialist to co-workers and supervisor must occur in order for a relationship to develop between the customer and his/her co-workers.

Instruction for Using Natural Cues

In some situations, the employment specialist still may need to consider providing more intensive instruction to assist the customer in responding to natural cues. Typically, this will include developing a task analysis (TA) of the job duty that incorporates learning to recognize these cues. Another option may be to write a TA that eliminates the need for the customer to attend to the cue. For instance, for the learner to vacuum the floor in a specific pattern and therefore does not have to determine where the floor is dirty or clean.

Once the task analysis is developed, the employment specialist can select a prompting strategy to train the customer. Instruction will vary based on the worker's choice, needs, and situation. The least amount of assistance should always be used first. For instance, when a flashing light comes on the dish machine indicating that the cycle is finished, the employment specialist could provide any number of prompts. The following list provides several examples in a least to most intrusive hierarchy. The reader is referred to the next section on prompting in this chapter for more information.

PROMPTING EXAMPLES FOR NATURAL CUES

- Provide an indirect verbal prompt (e.g., "what do you do now" or "what does that mean?").
- Give the customer a gestural prompt (e.g., point to the flashing light).
- Provide a direct verbal prompt (e.g., "the light is flashing, open the door of the dishmachine.").
- Provide a model prompt paired with a verbal prompt (e.g., the employment specialist opens the door of the dishmachine while saying, "I see the light is flashing on the dish machine"). The employment specialist then closes the door and asks the customer to complete the step in the task analysis.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Once the job duties are identified and task analyses developed, the employment specialist must design instructional programs for each job duty or other related skills to be taught. The design should include input from the customer, the supervisor, and co-workers. Each program includes 1) a training objective, 2) data collection guidelines, 3) prompting procedures, 4) reinforcement procedures, and 5) strategies for compensatory strategies and program modifications. The following sections outline each of these components in detail.

Step 1 ● *Program Objectives*

Training objectives are written to include observable skills, the conditions under which they occur, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate performance. Each skill to be trained has a corresponding training objective. The following is an example for entering data into a company's mailing list.

Conditions under which work performance will occur:

- *Given a list of addresses and say "add the names to the mailing list".*

Observable work skill:

- *Ramona will enter the names and addresses.*

Criteria for evaluation of worker performance:

- *With 100% accuracy according to the steps in the task analysis for three consecutive probe trials.*

Step 7 ● Data Collection Guidelines

Recording and graphing data is critical to the success of job site training. Measurement procedures are a vital component because they allow the employment specialist to monitor the employee's progress. It will show whether a particular training strategy is effective or needs modification (e.g., changing strategies, adding external cues, modifying tasks, etc.). Data collection also can provide documentation for the customer's continued funding (Moon et al., 1986).

Measurement procedures continue throughout initial job site training into long term supports. This will assist the employment specialist in identifying additional training or retraining needs for the customer. Finally, data collection should never be an intrusive or obvious process.

Baseline, probe, and prompt data are based on the task analysis of each major job duty and indicate whether the customer is working independently. Initial data collection before instruction begins is referred to as baseline and should be conducted at least once prior to the initiation of a skill acquisition program. Data which is collected after training begins is referred to as probe data. The procedures for baseline and probe data are essentially the same and provide information on how well the customer performs a job duty without prompting or reinforcement from the employment specialist. Probe data should be collected at least once each week. Typically, a job task is considered learned when the employee independently and correctly performs every step for a minimum of three consecutive probe trials.

There are two different strategies that an employment specialist can use to collect data on a job site to include a single or multiple opportunity probe. Regardless of which procedure is used, the employment specialist shows the customer how to perform the specific job duty prior to conducting baseline assessment. After training begins, the customer is asked to perform the job duty without any prompting or demonstration. Steps for using a single opportunity probe are listed in the following table.

GUIDELINES FOR USING A SINGLE OPPORTUNITY PROBE

1. Have the customer move to the appropriate work area unless movement is part of the task analysis.
2. Stand beside or behind the customer so data collection does not interrupt the work flow.
3. Tell the customer that he/she is going to work without assistance to see what he/she can do independently.
4. Provide the work cue (e.g., "Enter the names into the mailing list.").
5. Do not provide prompts or reinforcement.
6. Wait 3-5 seconds for the customer to make a response.
7. If he or she does not begin to work or makes an error, discontinue probe and score a (-) for all steps in task analysis.
8. If he or she begins work, continue as long as correct responses are made, scoring a (+) for correct performance.
9. As soon as an error occurs, discontinue probe and score a (-) for all remaining steps in the task analysis.

Adapted from Moon et al., 1986

There is one major benefit to using a single opportunity probe for data collection. Specifically, assessment should not be time consuming or interrupt the natural flow of the workplace. Discontinuing the probe as soon as the consumer makes an error allows for instruction to begin immediately on that specific step of the task analysis.

In contrast, use of a multiple opportunity probe shows which steps of the task the consumer is having difficulty performing without assistance, prompting, or reinforcement. The employment specialist must assess the work environment and length of task to determine the most appropriate strategy for data collection. The next table outlines the steps for a multiple opportunity probe procedure.

Establishing Baseline Using a Multiple Opportunity Probe Format

1. Have the consumer move to the appropriate work area unless movement is the first step in the task analysis.

2. Stand beside or behind the consumer so that data collection does not interrupt the work flow.

3. Provide the work cue (e.g., "[illegible]").

4. Do not provide verbal instruction, prompts, or reinforcement during data collection.

5. Wait a specified time (e.g., 3-5 seconds) for the consumer to initiate a response.

(Continued)

6. Record a (+) if the consumer completes the step correctly.

7. If there is no response or the consumer is incorrect, position the consumer to perform the next step in the task analysis or complete the step yourself (if necessary).

8. Repeat items #5, #6, and #7 as needed in order to test all steps in the task analysis from first to last.

Moon et al., [illegible]

Step 7 ● Prompting Procedures

Least Prompts: The majority of the literature on teaching vocational tasks to individuals with severe disabilities focuses on the use of least prompts as the teaching strategy of choice (Barcus, Brooke, Inge, Wehman, & Goodall, 1987; Cuvo, Leaf, & Borakove, 1978; Test, Grossi, & Keul, 1988). This strategy is also referred to as a response prompt hierarchy, since the trainer progresses from the least amount of assistance (usually a verbal prompt) to the most intrusive (usually a physical prompt) until one prompt results in the consumer correctly responding.

Employment specialists are encouraged to consider various types of prompts to use in addition to the traditional verbal, model, physical sequence. For instance, if a consumer becomes very proficient performing the first job duties, try using an indirect verbal prompt in the sequence such as "what do you do next?" before using the verbal prompt specific to the step in the task analysis. This may be effective also for training individuals who have been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for verbal instruction. In addition, gestures can be used instead of a model prompt. Or, a partial physical prompt (e.g., touching the customer's arm) can be used instead of total physical assistance. The following table lists prompts that can be used to assist a customer in learning the [illegible] job tasks.

PROMPT EXAMPLES

Indirect Verbal Instructions:

- "What do you do next?"
- "What do you do now?"
- "What happens next?"

(Example of an indirect cue given in response to a natural cue such as a light blinking on the copy machine.)

Direct Verbal Instructions:

- "Turn on the computer."
- "Staple the copy."
- "Fill the condiment containers."

Gestures:

- Point to the next item to prompt the customer to [illegible] [illegible].
- Tap a work surface to prompt the customer to take a [illegible] [illegible].
- Touch a stack of paper to prompt the customer to pick up the paper.

Model Prompts:

- Co-worker shows the customer how to [illegible] the employee break room.
- Supervisor demonstrates how to [illegible] on the [illegible].

Partial Physical Assistance:

- Employment specialist taps the customer on the elbow to prompt him/her to reach for the next [illegible].
- Employment specialist guides the customer's elbow to prompt him/her to pick up a plate.

(Continued)

Full Physical Assistance:

- Employment specialist with hand over the customer's hand, [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible].
- Employment specialist with hand on the customer's hand guides him/her in placing a [illegible] sticker on a [illegible].

Regardless of the types of prompts selected, the employment specialist must wait the length of time (latency period) that is set for the customer to respond before providing the next level of assistance. Usually a worker should be given approximately 3 to 5 seconds to respond independently. Individuals with physical disabilities, however, may require longer latency periods based on their movement limitations, and this should be determined on an individual basis ([illegible], 1995; [illegible] & [illegible], 1991). Finally, the employment specialist is cautioned to deliver each prompt only once before moving to the next more intrusive prompt.

[illegible] [illegible] A LEAST PROMPT HIERARCHY

1. Have the customer move to the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].
2. [illegible] [illegible] the individual [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].
3. Provide the cue to begin the task ("Clean the tables") or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

(Continued)

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Graphing Data

[illegible]

[illegible]

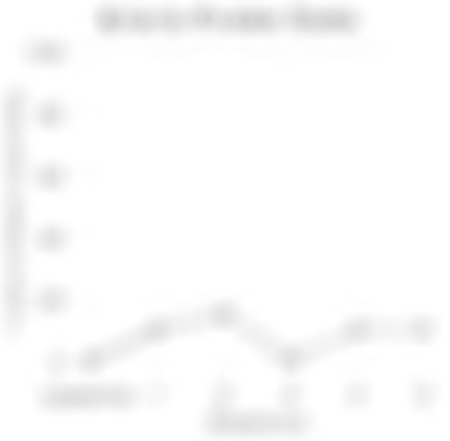
[illegible]

Graphing Case Study Example

[illegible]

Eric's Prompt Data

[illegible]



[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. [illegible]
6. [illegible]
   a. [illegible]
   b. [illegible]
   c. [illegible]
   d. [illegible]
   e. [illegible]
   f. [illegible]
   g. [illegible]

[illegible]

Time Delay Case Study Example

Monica is a young woman with cerebral palsy who is responsible for maintaining a company's mailing list. Initially, she could type using a headpointer, but she did not know how to use the software program to enter the names and addresses into the mailing list format. She learned this job duty with the assistance of an employment specialist and a time delay program.

First, the employment specialist loaded a software program called "sticky keys" onto Monica's computer to eliminate having to press two keys simultaneously (e.g. holding down the shift key while typing the first letter of a name). Second, she developed a task analysis for data entry. Third, the employment specialist selected a verbal prompt for the time delay strategy. This was the prompt of choice, since Monica always followed verbal instructions successfully. The task analysis for entering one name and corresponding address follows:

Enter Name and Address

1. Press up arrow key.
2. Press control key.
3. Type F.
4. Press shift key.
5. Type first name.
6. Press enter key.
7. Press shift key.
8. Type last name.
9. Press enter key.
10. Type company name.
11. Press enter key 2 x's.
12. Type street.
13. Press enter key 2 x's.
14. Type zip code.
15. Press enter key 2 x's.
16. Type today's date.
17. Press enter key 3 x's.
18. Type 1.
19. Press enter key 3 x's.
20. Begin next entry.

Monica's time delay program consisted of one day of work with 0-second time delay. For instance, as soon as the instructional cue, "enter a name and address" was given, the employment specialist gave the first verbal cue, "press up arrow key." As soon as Monica pressed the up arrow key, the next verbal prompt was given, "press the shift key", and so forth. In this manner, the employment specialist "verbally walked" Monica successfully through the first day of data entry. On the next day of instruction, the employment specialist used a 2 second delay procedure. This meant that she paused for 2 seconds between prompts, for instance:

Give instructional cue.

Enter name and address.

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if Monica correctly initiates first step in the task before prompt. If no response, provide a verbal cue specific to first step in the task analysis.

1. Press up arrow key. (Verbal prompt)

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if correct response before prompt. If no response, give verbal cue for next step.

2. Press control key. (Verbal prompt)

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if correct response before prompt. If no response, give verbal cue for next step.

3. Type F. (Verbal prompt)

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if correct response before prompt. If no response, give verbal cue for next step.

4. Press shift key. (Verbal prompt)

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if correct response before prompt. If no response, give verbal cue for next step.

5. Type first name. (Verbal prompt)

- Wait 2 seconds. Reinforce if correct response before prompt. If no response, give verbal cue for next step, etc.

If Monica began to make a mistake while the employment specialist was waiting between steps, she was interrupted immediately with the next verbal prompt. The delay level between steps was gradually increased each day until Monica was working independently.

Step 4 ■ Reinforcement Procedures

Selection of reinforcers as well as the systematic delivery of reinforcement can assist the customer in becoming successful in the workplace. Typically, the most effective reinforcers are those that occur as a natural consequence to a given task or situation within the work environment (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). Therefore, the employment specialist begins by identifying items that are available on the job site. This includes such things as co-worker praise, supervisor approval, positive written supervisor evaluations, pay raises or bonuses, and so forth.

However, some workers with significant disabilities may not initially understand the relationship between working and naturally occurring reinforcers such as earning a paycheck and approval from co-workers and supervisors. In these instances, more tangible reinforcers may be used initially and gradually faded as the naturally occurring ones become meaningful. For example, there may be a vending machine located within the employee break room which can be used to reinforce the worker at the end of a job duty or an employee cafeteria where he or she can get a snack. The addition of edible or tangible reinforcers should never be used unless a procedure for fading them is built into the training program.

Remember that all individuals will not be reinforced by the same items and that even the most preferred reinforcer, if used too frequently, will lose its effectiveness (Falvey, 1989). Only after failing to identify a natural reinforcer, should the employment specialist select more artificial items (Moon et al., 1990). The following information may be useful in identifying potential reinforcers for supported employment customers (Barcus et al., 1987; Falvey, 1989; Inge, Barcus, Brooke, & Everson, 1995; Moon et al., 1990).

1. Survey the customer and those familiar with him/her to determine likes and dislikes. Include leisure activities, tangible items, types of verbal reinforcement, etc. Consider asking some of the following questions.
    a. What are some things you like to do by yourself for fun?
    b. What do you enjoy doing with friends/family in your free time?
    c. Do you have any hobbies or games you enjoy?
    d. Are there any hobbies or games you would like to learn?
    e. Do you like listening to music?

   f. Tell me about the type of music you like.
   g. Who do you like spending time with?
   j. If you had 50¢, $1, $5, $10, etc., what would you buy?
2. Observe the customer in several natural environments (e.g., at home, in a restaurant, at the mall) during his or her free time and record what he or she does.
3. Offer the customer a chance to interact with several novel items and record what he or she does. Often individuals with limited experiences, do not know what they like to do. Offering them options, allows customers to develop choices and interests. If the customer can not tell you about his or her choices, repeat the experiences over several days and determine if there is a pattern to the customer's choices.
4. Select an item and use it as a reinforcer. Observe to see if the worker's skill level increases.

Timing: After a reinforcer has been identified for use on a job site, a schedule of reinforcement should be established. Many customers who require additional reinforcement do not understand the connection between work well done and the paycheck. Ideally, all reinforcement is provided immediately following the occurrence of the desired work skill. However, it usually is not feasible on a job site to provide tangible or edible reinforcement immediately after a response occurs. In these instances, the employment specialist must develop a training program that uses exchangeable reinforcers on predetermined schedules. These systems must be age appropriate and not draw attention to the worker. Exchangeable items may include money, tokens, points on a card, checks on a calendar, and so forth. These items are exchanged later for the item(s) that the customer selects.

There are several advantages to using exchangeable reinforcers (Moon et al., 1990). First, if the employment specialist uses money as the exchangeable item, he or she is teaching the customer the relationship between work and money. Also, all food and tangible objects (e.g., magazine) can be given at an appropriate time such as during break. Finally, the employment specialist can gradually increase the program requirements for earning the exchangeable item in order to fade the reinforcement. As an example, a customer earns 10¢ for every five minutes of work. At the end of one hour, he or she can spend the money earned in the vending machine.

Whenever, exchangeable tokens are used, the employment specialist also should provide verbal praise for working. As the customer becomes more successful, verbal praise usually becomes reinforcing. The tangible item gradually can be faded to naturally occurring praise from the supervisor and/or co-workers.

Schedule of delivery: Employment specialists can use two types of schedules to include a predetermined number of responses: *ratio schedule* of reinforcement; or a predetermined period of time, *interval schedule* of reinforcement (Inge, Dymond, Wehman, et al., 1993; Moon et al., 1990). Either of these types of schedules can be fixed or variable. In a fixed ratio schedule, reinforcement is provided to the customer after a set **number** of responses (e.g., after every step in the task analysis, after every 3 steps in the TA, after every 5 names entered into the mailing list, after every 5 towels folded, and so forth.) Or the employment specialist can use a variable schedule which requires giving the customer the reinforcement after an average number of responses (e.g., on the average of every 3 steps in the TA, on the average of every 5 names entered into the mailing list, and so forth.) If a variable schedule is used, the customer usually does not anticipate when reinforcement will be provided which may approximate how reinforcement is provided in natural work environments.

Use of an interval schedule requires that reinforcement is provided based on **time** intervals. Using a fixed interval schedule, the employment specialist may decide to reinforce the customer after every 5 minutes, at the end of a half hour, an hour, end of the day, and so forth. A variable interval schedule occurs on the average of a set period of time such as on the average of every half hour. Interval schedules of reinforcement are most like the naturally occurring reinforcement schedules on a job site. For instance, a paycheck is usually earned on a fixed interval schedule of once a week. Or, a supervisor typically praises his/her employees based on time intervals such as an annual performance evaluation.

When using ratio and interval schedules of reinforcement, the employment specialist should determine the number of responses or the length of the intervals for reinforcement based on the support needs of the customer. Obviously, if he/she works successfully with earning a paycheck once a week, a more intensive schedule should not be considered. However, if the customer has no concept of a paycheck, a more intrusive level of reinforcement should be implemented. Only when the employment specialist fades to the naturally occurring reinforcement of the job site will the customer be independent in the work place. Figure 2 in the appendix of this chapter provides a training program which demonstrates the fading of reinforcement.

COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES

Adding compensatory strategies to job-site training can enhance a customer's ability to learn and perform independently. In some instances, using a compensatory strategy can eliminate instruction and allow the individual to participate in activities that he/she otherwise would not be able. For instance, a customer may use a "money card" to purchase a soda from the break room vending machine. The money card eliminates the need for the customer to learn the difference between coins or the actual amount that is required to access the machine. However, the steps in using a compensatory strategy may require instruction and should be included within any task analyses that are developed.

If compensatory strategies are targeted, they must be designed with input from the customer, employer, and co-workers. In addition, care should be given to the design and construction of materials to ensure that they do not stigmatize the customer. Materials should be those that any adult could access within a work environment and would be accepted by the work culture where they are used.

For instance, if a picture book is selected to assist a customer in remembering his/her work schedule, the employment specialist and customer should work together in the design of the booklet. Some of the things they may want to consider include the following:

- Pictures should be concise and eliminate unnecessary information.
- The number of pictures in the booklet should be evaluated. Too many may distract or confuse the customer rather than assist in task completion.
- The size of the booklet must be evaluated. Does it draw attention to the customer? Could it be made small enough to fit in a pocket?
- The materials must be those that any adult would use.
- The booklet should be durable. How often will it need to be replaced? Who will be assisting the customer after the employment specialist has faded from the work place?
- The materials should be simple to use. Is there a less complicated strategy that is just as effective? For instance, could the customer learn to use a written list of job tasks rather than a bulky picture book?

While the above list has been designed specific to the use of a picture booklet, the same concepts or ideas could be applied to almost any compensatory strategy used on a job site. They should be simple to use, concise, and the least intrusive strategy selected that will assist the customer in performing his/her job duties.

Case Study Using a Picture Book

Randy learned to perform his job duty of vacuuming the second floor of a local department store. However, he had difficulty moving from one department to another. For instance, one day he would remember to vacuum the shoe department while on another day, he would skip it entirely. On yet another day, he would remember to vacuum the shoe department, but forget to vacuum the woman's coat area. The employment specialist discussed this with Randy and his employer, and they came up with the following solution.

There were five areas Randy needed to vacuum in a day including: woman's coats, woman's shoes, woman's dresses, woman's accessories, and cosmetics. The employment specialist copied pictures that represented each area of the second floor. The pictures were approximately 3" by 3". Booklets were developed by stapling five pictures together in a packet. Randy's supervisor agreed to make sure that there were booklets always available in his locker.

At the beginning of a work day, Randy took out one booklet from his locker. He proceeded to the area of the store to be vacuumed as represented by the first picture in the packet. After he completed vacuuming the section, Randy tore the top picture from the booklet and threw it in the trash. He then moved to the next area. In this manner, Randy was able to sequence the sections of the store for vacuuming. Throwing away a picture after the work was completed seemed to be very reinforcing and helped Randy move through his work day.

Summary: Employment specialists are encouraged to design other compensatory strategies specific to customers for whom they are intended to benefit. Many types of added cues and prompts can be used. The following table provides more compensatory strategy ideas.

COMPENSATORY STRATEGY IDEAS

The customer can't remember his/her sequence of job duties.

- written list
- audio-cassette
- picture book
- assignment board
- flow chart

The customer has difficulty reading copy requests to determine work assignments.

- in/out boxes for each co-worker requesting work with name or picture of co-worker on box
- special form highlighting relevant features of the task such as thick out-lined box where number of copies is located
- audio-cassette requests for copy work

The customer can't count to package work materials.

- strips of tape on table which correspond to # of items in package
- picture of # of items in the package
- box with # of dividers which correspond to # of items in package
- sample of package for matching work

Compensatory Memory Strategies

Some individuals with brain injury will have specific memory difficulties related to their disability (Briel, in press; Kreutzer & Wehman, 1990; Penn & Cleary, 1988). This may include problems with auditory and visual memory and learning, as well as short and long term memory. Compensatory strategies are one way to deal with these issues. Some of the specific strategies that have been suggested for customers with brain injury include the use of imagery, number chunking, memory notebooks, verbal labeling, and verbal rehearsal, to mention a few. The following information is adapted from:

1. handout materials compiled by Virginia Commonwealth University's, Medical College of Virginia Neuropsychology Service in 1993,
2. a Supported Employment Telecourse Network broadcast from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment, and
3. personal communication with Ms. Pam Sherron, Employment Services Director at the RRTC.

- ***Imagery:*** The process of using mental pictures/images of information to be recalled. **Example:** *The customer visualizes himself walking a specific route to assist in remembering how to find his job site.*
- ***Mnemonic:*** Impose an organizational structure on verbal information to cue recall of several elements. **Example:** *A clerical assistant recalls her sequence of job duties by remembering the word,* ***code****.*

C = clock in
O = open mail
D = deliver mail
E = enter data

- ***Number Grouping:*** Recalling numbers by perceptually reorganizing them into fewer elements. **Example:** *A customer working at central supply in a hospital needed to remember to pull items based on a four digit code. She would look at a computer printout and see four numbers such as 1,7,2, and 5. Instead of saying these separately, she recalled the information as seventeen twenty-five.*
- ***Memory Notebook:*** Maintaining written cues systematically in a log to keep up with things that have been done or need to be accomplished. **Example:** *A date or daytime organizer book is used by employees to remember appointments.*
- ***Verbal Rehearsal:*** Repeating key information to facilitate memory recall. **Example:** *Inventory control specialist for sets up her work station by stating the following aloud: 1.) turn on monitor; 2.) turn on computer, 3.) enter my password, 4.) hit enter, etc. She eventually learns to internalize this process by repeating the instruction quietly until she no longer needs to verbalize the information.*
- ***Assignment Board:*** A graphically presented list of task assignments. **Example:** *A customer keeps a bulletin board on the door of her locker. She lists her job duties with specific times for completion to refer to if needed throughout her work day.*
- ***Location and Place Markers:*** A visual cue physically placed at some point in a task sequence indicating where the task is to be resumed. **Example:** *Warehouse worker who straightens shelf inventory sometimes is called off task to fill an order. He cannot remember where he leaves his straightening task. The worker ties a bandanna on the shelf to cue himself for coming back to where he left off.*

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management has been referred to as self-monitoring, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement, self-instruction, and self-assessment, to mention a few terms (Browder & Shapiro, 1985; Karoly, 1977; Kazdin, 1984; Shapiro, 1981). Self-management strategies may be applied either before or after the targeted job duty or skill to 'assist the worker in performing a task successfully. For instance, the worker may use a preset alarm on a watch to determine when it is time to take a break. Another example, may be a worker who uses a compensatory strategy such as a picture book of tasks that need to be completed during the day. Yet another example, might be a worker who evaluates his/her work performance in order to self-reinforce such as marking checks on a card for a specific amount of work which is later exchanged for a reinforcer. The following table provides examples of self-management terms, definitions, and examples.

FREQUENTLY USED TERMS AND EXAMPLES OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-Assessment...Discriminating the occurrence of one's behavior (Shapiro, 1981, p. 268).

Example: Bill assesses whether he has or has not completed a work task such as wiping all the tables in a fast food restaurant.

Self-Reinforcement...Providing oneself with reinforcing consequences contingent upon work performance (Kazdin, 1984, p. 300). This strategy usually is combined with other procedures such as self-assessment.

Examples: Mary takes a coin from a box and places it in her pocket after vacuuming each section of the department store (e.g., shoe section, women's sportswear, etc.).

Marcia places a check on a card after she prices all the items in a box. She exchanges these checks for a preferred item (e.g., soda, magazine, etc.) at the end of her work day.

Self-Instruction...Verbal statements to oneself which prompt, direct, or maintain behavior (O'Leary & Dubey, 1979, p. 459).

Example: John instructs himself by speaking out loud. Such as.."First, I go to the supply closet and get my cart...Now, I go to the windows...Spray the glass... Am I getting all the dirt?...Move on to the next set...Work fast." etc.

Table Adapted From: Browder, D.M. & Shapiro, E.S. (1985). Applications of self-management to individuals with severe handicaps: A review. JASH, 10(4), 200-208.

The effectiveness of self-management procedures has been well documented. For instance, Shafer and Brooke (1985) used a self-recording strategy to increase the punctuality of a young woman in a community job site. The supported employment customer recorded her check-out time on a piece of paper that was printed with a calendar grid. She was responsible for recording the time that her supervisor told her to leave the job site on this card, as well as, using the time clock to punch-out. The employment specialist compared her self-recording card with the actual punch-out time every three or four days. This self-monitoring strategy was successful in decreasing the number of days that the worker left the job site prior to schedule **without** daily supervision from the employment specialist.

Self-management usually entails instructing the employee to independently self-monitor by using such things as natural cues, adding external cues and prompts, compensatory strategies, assistive technology devices, and so forth. This instruction can be provided by the employment specialist, friends, family member, co-workers, and/or the supervisor depending on the customer's support needs. For instance, a family member may assist the customer in learning to check off days on a calendar to determine when he/she goes to work. A co-worker may instruct the same individual in using a timer to monitor production, while the employment specialist assists the individual in developing a self- reinforcement strategy to use on the job when he/she meets the production standard. Regardless of who provides the customer instruction and support, the following guidelines should be considered.

1. Review training data. If the employee is having specific difficulties in sequencing, discriminating, meeting production, consider using self-management procedures.
2. Consider the learning style of the customer. Does he/she respond best to visual, auditory, tactile information, or is a combination of these needed?
3. Determine if the self-management strategies are stigmatizing. For instance, self-instruction may not be appropriate for the customer who is in frequent contact with co-workers and the public.
4. Always have the customer assist in the design and selection of self-management strategies.
5. Include the supervisor and/or co-workers in the process. Don't implement a strategy without approval.
6. Decide who will be responsible for supporting the customer in learning how to self-monitor.
7. Evaluate the procedure and modify if necessary.
8. Fade the self-management procedure if necessary.

INCREASING PRODUCTION TO COMPANY STANDARDS

Employment specialists are cautioned to provide initial skill training at a pace that requires the worker to maintain a steady and standard speed of performance. If this is successful, the customer should be performing his or her job duties to company standards once the skills are acquired. However, sometimes a customer may still need additional training to meet the company production rate.

Prior to developing a formal program, the employment specialist should determine if the customer is performing all steps of the task analysis as they were designed. Sometimes, production issues can be related to inefficient task analysis development or to inefficient worker implementation. In addition, some production issues are the result of the customer's ability to attend to the work task. Simply, moving the customer's work station to an area with less distractions may be enough to increase his or her production rate. The following steps should be completed prior to initiating training to increase the customer's production rate (Moon et al., 1990).

Steps in determining whether a formal program is necessary to increase production rate.

- Review the probe data for the task. Make sure the customer is performing all steps of the task analysis as designed.
- If the customer is not performing all steps, resume the training program until he/she is performing the steps of the TA in order.
- If all steps are being performed correctly, review the TA. Revise the task so that it is performed as efficiently as possible. (e.g., reduce worker movement).

- If the TA is revised, begin training until the customer is completing the job duty based on the revisions.
- If the original TA is satisfactory, determine if the customer is having difficulty with on-task behavior. If he/she has more than 20% off-task behavior, implement a training program.
- If the TA is efficient and on/off task performance is not a problem, design and implement a program to increase production.

Verify the job site production standard: The first step in increasing the customer's production rate is to verify a company standard which can be used to compare the employee's rate. This is accomplished by asking the supervisor if there is an established company production standard for each job duty that the worker is performing. Preferably, the employment specialist and the customer have been aware of this production rate from the first day of job-site training.

After the employer provides the current standard, the employment specialist should verify the rate based on the performance of co-workers who are performing these tasks. This can be accomplished by observing one or two employees for several days and taking an average of their production rate. If the production rate is defined by the **length of time** it takes to perform a job duty, complete the following steps:

Production Standard Based on Time

1. Note the time that the co-worker begins the job duty.
2. Observe the co-worker performing the task.
3. Note the time he/she completes the task.
4. Subtract the beginning time from the ending time to determine the amount of time it takes to complete the job duty.
5. Take an average production rate across several days to verify a company standard.

If the production standard is determined by counting the **number of units** completed during a given time period, complete the following steps to verify the company standard:

Production Standard Based on # of Units

1. Identify two time periods during the day to observe co-worker perform the job duty.
2. Count and record the number of units completed (e.g., number of towels folded) during the identified sample time period (e.g., 10 minutes, 30 minutes, etc.).
3. Keep the time period constant over all observation periods.
4. Take an average of the co-worker's production rate to verify a company standard.

Determining the Customer's Production Rate: After the company standard has been established, the customer should compare his/her rate to determine if additional training and support is required. Follow the above procedures to determine the customer's rate. Then divide the company standard by the customer's rate to get a percentage of standard for the worker. For instance, if the company rate is to finish the job duty in 15 minutes and the customer is taking 30 minutes, divide 15 by 30 to arrive at 50% of the production standard. Or, if the company rate is determined by the number of units completed, divide the number of units that the customer completed in the time period by the number completed by the co-worker. For instance, the customer folds 10 towels in the time period while the company standard is 25 towels. The customer's current production rate would 40% of the standard or 10 divided by 25. A production standard data form is located in the appendix of this chapter. The following case study is an example of how one customer learned to increase her production using self-management procedures.

Self-Management Case Study Example

Jessica works part-time at a restaurant as a bus person 9:00 a.m. to noon, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and 9:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Friday. From the first day of work, Jessica has earned $4.25 per hour for a total of 15 hours per week. During the times of the week that Jessica does not work, she attends her regular school program. Her primary job duty is to roll silverware and distribute it to the bus stations. She also occasionally greets customers as they enter the restaurant.

This job was designed for Jessica by the restaurant manager and her employment specialist. It was determined during the initial interview, that the waitresses have difficulty keeping an adequate supply of silverware during the work day. As such, the manager was very receptive to creating a position for Jessica that freed up the waitresses from this part of their job responsibility.

Initial job-site training took place throughout the restaurant, however the majority of the instruction occurred at a small work station located between two dining rooms. Waitresses and other employees constantly move in and out of this area, since it houses supplies for setting the tables, as well as, serving non-alcoholic beverages.

Initial Training

Initially, Jessica was trained by her employment specialist to roll silverware using a least prompt strategy. She successfully learned the task and could perform it without prompting; however, an analysis of her program data indicated that Jessica did not meet the production standards for rolling silver-ware. Jessica, her employment specialist, and supervisor decided that she should try using a self-management procedure.

Measurement and Recording Procedures

The first step in assisting Jessica in meeting production was to set and verify a company standard for rolling silverware. The manager wanted this task completed at a steady, constant work pace, but he did not have a specific predetermined standard for Jessica to follow. Therefore, the employment specialist observed co-workers, observed Jessica's production without reinforcement or prompting, and completed the task himself to determine a reasonable rate of performance. A production standard of **10** pieces of silverware in **8** minutes was set, and the manager and co-workers agreed that the rate would be satisfactory. Prior to implementing the program design, the employment specialist took a baseline of Jessica's performance. When measured unobtrusively, she completed one piece of silverware an average of every 90 seconds (10 pieces of silverware in 15 minutes.)

Program Design

Self-Monitoring: Two cues were selected based on Jessica's learning style to assist her in self-monitoring production. First, an auditory cue, a digital kitchen timer, was purchased by the employment specialist, and **8** minutes was placed in its stored memory. Next, a visual cue, **10** strips of colored tape, were placed on the table to the right side of Jessica's work station. Each piece of tape corresponded to one piece of rolled silverware. Jessica was trained to punch the "start/stop" button on the timer as the first step in beginning her silverware task. After rolling one piece of silverware, she placed the completed work on a strip of tape. Essentially, Jessica was instructed to fill the "cue area" with silverware prior to the alarm sounding on the timer.

Self-Reinforcement: The second component of the program was the design of a "reinforcement booklet." A line drawing of **4** pieces of silverware positioned on a napkin was created by the employment specialist. He then divided one page of standard white bond paper into **5** sections approximately **8" by 2 1/4"**. Within these **5** sections, ten line drawings were positioned. Next, the employment specialist used the copy machine to produce multiple pages of the "reinforcer". After producing the pages, he cut them into strips and stapled **5** "reinforcer" sheets together to make a booklet.

Self-reinforcement occurred after Jessica picked up the ten rolls of silverware from the "tape grid" and placed them in a silverware bin. If the timer had not rung, she pushed the "start/stop" button, picked up the "reinforcer booklet", tore off a sheet, and placed it on the table beside her work. At the end of the day, Jessica could take these "earned" pages to show at school and at home. If the timer rang prior to completion of ten pieces of silverware, Jessica was to tear off a reinforcer sheet and throw it in the trash can. She then finished the remainder of the ten, put the silverware in the finished silverware bin, and started on the next set of ten by setting the timer.

Five sections of ten were selected for each reinforcer sheet, since this corresponded to the number of napkins, **50**, in a pack, as well as, approximately **1** hour of work. It was felt that this could further assist Jessica in self-monitoring her production/speed. In other words, at the end of one hour of work, Jessica should have an empty pack of napkins, a full bin of rolled silverware, and a reinforcer sheet that she could take to school or home at the end of the day. The extra was allowed for getting new supplies and distributing the silverware to the waitress stations. In addition, Jessica's co-workers assisted her by agreeing to check on her at the end of each hour. If she had completed the task, she was able to assist her co-worker as a door greeter until the beginning of the next hour of work.

The employment specialist took the responsibility of assisting Jessica in learning how to use the self-monitoring program. Once she learned the task, her production standard was maintained with the support of her co-workers. Initially, Jessica did not fully understand the concept of working at a constant speed. The use of the self-management procedures assisted her in meeting production without constant interference from the employment specialist, until she began to do so independently. In addition, it is suggested that the natural consequences of working at an acceptable speed (e.g. positive interactions from her supervisor and co-workers) began to influence Jessica's work performance. The self-management procedures quickly lead to the transfer of control from artificial prompts and reinforcers to the naturally occurring supports on the job site. By using a self-management procedure Jessica is in control of her training, and she presents a competent image to her co-workers.

JOB SITE MODIFICATIONS

In some cases, the initial training program does not result in the customer learning the job duties. If this is the case, the employment specialist must determine how to revise the training plan. This can be done by reviewing the data and pinpointing what changes need to be made. Occasionally, the employment specialist may find it difficult to determine exactly what is limiting success. In these instances, several employment specialists and the program manager should brainstorm solutions to the problems encountered. The following list of questions can assist in program modifications (Inge, et al., 1993; Moon et al., 1990). The answers will assist the employment specialist in modifying the training program to meet the support needs of the customer.

1. ***Analyze the training program.***

- Does the prompting procedure (least prompts, time delay) match the learning style of the customer?
- Is the customer responding to the type of prompt(s) selected?
- Is the customer distracted by noise or people in the environment? Is he/she attending to the job task? Can the location of the task be modified to decrease distractions?
- Can you reduce the number of job duties being taught in order to provide repeated practice on a specific job duty?

2. ***Evaluate the task analysis.***

- Has the task been analyzed to match the customer's abilities?
- Can the steps be further analyzed into smaller components?
- Have the physical abilities of the customer been taken into consideration? Can the task analysis be modified to match the motor skills of the worker?

- Does the task analysis eliminate the need to make quality judgements?
- Do the steps in the tasks analysis include any added cues or compensatory strategies that have been added to the job duty?
- Can several steps of the task be taught rather than the whole task analysis?

3. ***Assess the reinforcement.***
    - Are the naturally occurring reinforcers meaningful to the customer?
    - Does he or she need additional reinforcement to learn the job duty?
    - Has a program to systematically fade added reinforcement been designed and followed based on data collection?
    - Is the selected reinforcer(s) motivating to the customer?
    - Is the timing of reinforcement correct?
    - Does the schedule of reinforcement (variable vs. ratio) meet the support needs of the customer?
    - Has the reinforcement been faded too quickly?

4. ***Consider assistive technology.***
    - Is the customer's mobility or motor abilities affecting his or her skill acquisition?
    - Can the customer physically perform the job, but is it difficult or physically impossible for him or her to meet the production demands of the job?
    - Does the worker become fatigued when attempting to perform the motor demands of the task?
    - Has the work site been modified to meet the physical support needs of the customer? Are the work supplies positioned for maximum accessibility?
    - Would the customer's level of independence be increased by the application of assistive technology?
    - Is the job site supportive of technology, and will co-workers be available to provide assistance during a difficult portion of the task?
    - Can the job be restructured to better match the physical abilities of the customer?

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

A customer with physical challenges will have specialized support needs in the workplace (Inge & Sharpton, 1995; Sowers & Powers, 1991). These challenges can be met with assistive technology devices and services. The 1994 Reauthorization of the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals Act (Tech Act) defined assistive technology (AT) devices and services:

> The term *assistive technology device* means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities [20 U.S.C. § 140(25)].
>
> The term *assistive technology service* means any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device [20 U.S.C. § 140(26)].

There is a continuum of complexity in technology related to the device as well as the type of materials or manufacturing techniques used to produce the device (Inge & Shepherd, 1995). Low technology usually includes devices which are simple, with few or no moveable parts (Mann & Lane, 1991). Low technology devices that customers may use on job sites may include 1) dycem (a non-skid mat which can stabilize work materials for the customer), 2) keyguards, 3) book stands, 4) reachers, 5) laptray, 6) built-up or enlarged handles on utensils or work tools. Low technology devices can be purchased almost anywhere from the local hardware store, catalogues, or can be made from materials that are found in a home workshop. Usually, these devices are low cost and can be obtained quickly.

High technology devices are defined by the use of electronics, specialized manufacturing techniques, and materials (Anson, 1993). High technology is most often associated with computers, robotics, environmental control units, power wheelchairs, and so forth. Rehabilitation engineers; occupational, physical, speech therapists; or other rehabilitation personnel can assist customers in identifying and obtaining high technology devices.

High tech devices are typically available through vendors of specialized companies dealing in specific types of merchandise. AT services and devices can be paid for by the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Medicaid, Social Security Work Incentives, private insurance, and by the employer (Wallace, 1995). Technology support needs should be identified after the customer has selected a career path or potential job (Powers, 1995). This is very different from identifying devices and services and then trying to fit it into a job site. The following table provides information resources in the area ot assistive technology.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Abledata
Silver Spring, MD
(800) 227-0216

Apple Computer, Inc.
Office of Special Education
20525 Mariani Avenue
Cupertino, CA 95014

Assistive Technology Sourcebook
RESNA Press
Department 4006
Washington, DC 20042-4006

Fred Sammons, Inc.
Box 32
Brookfield, Il 60513

Helen Keller National Center
111 Middle Neck Road
Sands Point, NY 11050

IBM
National Support Center for Persons with Disabilities
PO Box 2150
Atlanta, GA 30301-2105

Job Accommodation Network
918 Chestnut Ridge Road, Suite 1
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
(800) ADA-WORK (voice & TDD)

(Continued)

National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)
8455 Colesville Road, Suite 935
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3319

National Technology Center
American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

Prentke Romich Company
1022 Heyl Road
Wooster, OH 44691

President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities
1331 F Street, N. W., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 376-6200 (voice)
(202) 376-6205 (TDD)

RESNA (Association for the Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology)
1700 North Monroe Street, Suite 1540
Arlington, VA 22209-1903

Assistive technology cannot provide solutions for all challenges faced by the customer. For instance, it may be unwise to identify a job with an extremely high production standard even if technology is available. Employment specialists should identify a support team to include the customer; family members; employer; assistive technology vendors; occupational, physical, and speech therapists; and rehabilitation engineers to assist in identifying technology for the workplace.

Assistive Technology Case Study

Monica is a young woman whose physical abilities are challenged by cerebral palsy. She found a job with the assistance of an employment specialist entering data into a company's mailing list. Her employment specialist identified that she had many abilities that she could bring to the company, as well as challenges that could be met with assistive technology and supported employment. These strengths and challenges follow:

Monica's strengths:

- Types simple letters to friends and family members using a headpointer.
- Knows how to use a manual typewriter.
- Reads on a basic level, but she can copy whatever is written on the paper with accuracy even if she can't read the words.
- Is very social and expresses an interest in learning to use a computer for data entry.
- Uses a power chair for mobility.
- Can lift her right arm to shoulder height.
- Is extremely motivated to work.

Monica's work challenges:

- Can not use her fingers on either hand to grasp objects.
- Is not able to manipulate paper for data entry.
- Must rely on others for daily care activities.
- Does not have any computer training or previous work experiences.

The first issue to solve was to determine how Monica would manipulate paper for data entry. Requests for the mailing list arrive at the company on telephone message pads, business cards, and even scrap pieces of paper. Monica would not be able to pick up these small pieces of paper and move them. This concern was raised with Monica's supervisor who suggested a solution to the problem. She offered to tape requests on a standard 8 ½ by 11" piece of typing paper. After a page was full of requests, she would give these to Monica for data entry.

The next issue would be to determine how Monica would move the sheets of typing paper. It was decided that a standard secretarial stand could be attached to the side of her table to hold the papers. A page turner could then be installed to drop the pages one at a time. A rehabilitation engineer was called to make this device. In addition, he was asked to make a data entry guide that would move down the page to assist Monica in visually keeping her place. This required a two directional switch and a motor for the guide.

After working on these devices, the rehabilitation engineer reported that he was successful in producing the data entry guide but was having difficulty developing the page turner portion of the device. At this point, an occupational therapist evaluated Monica to determine if she would be able to move the paper from the device without adding the page turner. A task analysis revealed that she could take her head pointer and pull the top of the paper forward. Once she had accomplished this, Monica could raise her arm to shoulder level and push the paper off the stand with the side of her hand. Timing Monica's physical movement revealed that she could push a sheet of paper off the typing stand within 30 seconds, a reasonable time for completion of the task.

Next, a keyguard was ordered from a computer supply store and placed on the computer keyboard to assist Monica in striking the correct keys when typing. A software program, "sticky keys" was installed on her computer which eliminated the need for her to depress two keys simultaneously. The computer was placed on a table which had blocks to raise it to a comfortable work height. Finally, Monica's employment specialist designed task analyses and an instructional program to assist her in learning her job duties. This instructional program was discussed earlier in the prompting section of this chapter.

CHANGE IN THE CUSTOMER'S JOB DUTIES

Sometimes, in spite of efforts to change the instructional program, modify the workplace, or add assistive technology devices and services, the customer still has difficulty performing a job duty (Moon et al., 1990). In these instances, the employment specialist may need to negotiate with the employer to determine if a co-worker can share the job duty or switch for one that is of equal responsibility. The customer, employer, co-worker(s), and employment specialist should meet to discuss the alternatives. A change in the customer's responsibilities will necessitate the implementation of a new instructional program for training him/her in performance of the new job duties.

FADING FROM THE JOB SITE

Once the worker has learned to perform all the skills necessary correctly and independently, the employment specialist must ensure that the performance of these duties are maintained to company standards under naturally occurring supervision and reinforcement. The focus of training at this point is to increase the worker's independence while fading the employment specialist's presence from the job site. Much of this will occur naturally if the employment specialist has paid attention to including the supervisor and co-workers in the program design from day one of job-site training.

For instance, as the customer begins performing steps in the task analysis independently, the employment specialist fades his or her presence from the immediate work area (e.g., the employment specialist is 3 feet away from the customer and then 5 feet, etc.). This procedure was described earlier in the data collection section of this chapter. If planning has been done correctly, the employment specialist is now ready to develop a fading schedule for leaving the job site.

The customer's first time alone for part of the day is a significant step. The employment specialist should explain to the customer, supervisor, and co-workers that he or she can be contacted and will return to the job site immediately if needed. As the customer continues to do well based on data results and supervisor and co-worker comments, the employment specialist gradually fades his or her presence until the worker is alone for an entire work day. Initially, the employment specialist should stop by the job site at the end of the day to ensure that the customer is comfortable with the fading schedule. The following guidelines may be useful when fading from the job site.

GUIDELINES FOR FADING FROM THE JOB SITE

1. Discuss the fading schedule with the customer and supervisor.
2. Agree on a day to begin fading the employment specialist's presence.
3. Inform the customer and co-workers (if appropriate) that you are leaving the job site and for how long.
4. Give the customer and supervisor a telephone number where the employment specialist can be reached.
5. Leave for 1-2 hours for the first fading session.
6. Continue to collect probe, on/off task, and production data on the job duties.
7. Gradually increase your time off the site as the customer continues to be independent, until he or she is working for the entire day with the naturally occurring support of the workplace.

SUMMARY

Job-site training involves the direct instruction of job duties and related non-vocational skills. The employment specialist's role is to facilitate the customer's successful work performance; be available for support to the customer, supervisor, and co-workers; and to fade from the job site as quickly as possible. Once the employment specialist has implemented the procedures outlined in this chapter based on the support needs of the customer, and the worker is independently completing his or her job under naturally occurring supervision of the job site, the employment specialist moves into the follow-along phase of supported employment.

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APPENDIX

- Sequence of Job Duties Form
- Task Analysis Form
- Percent Time On-Task Data Form
- Production Rate Recording Form

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER
Sequence of Job Duties Form

☐ Daily
(Job duties remain
the same from day-to-day

☐ Varies day-to-day
(If checked here, complete a
separate form for each different
sequence)
If above box is checked, indicate
day for which this form is completed:

☐ Mon ☐ Tues ☐ Wed ☐ Thurs ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Approximate Time	Job Duty

Comments: ____

____

____

____

SIGNATURE/TITLE: ____________________ DATE: ______________

Task Analysis Form

Trainer: ______________________________

Customer: ______________________________

Environment: ______________________________

Work Cue: ______________________________

Data Collection:	+	independent correct response
	-	incorrect response
	v	verbal prompt
	m	model prompt
	p	physical prompt

Percent Time On-Task Data

Employee: ______________________ Job Site: ______________________

Trainer: ______________________ Job Title: ______________________

Date	Observation Period	Time Start	Time End	1-Minute Intervals (+) = On-Task; (-) = Off-Task										% Time On-Task	Job Duty

Definitions:

On-Task: ____

Off-Task: ____

Production Rate Recording Form

Name: ____ ______________ Month: ____________________

Task: ____________________ Standard: ____________________

Date	Time Begin Task	Time End Task	Total Time	Units Completed	% of Standard

Standard is the average number of units completed by co-workers performing the same task within a specified time period, or the standard can be the length of time that it takes the co-workers to complete the job duty.

Calculate standard by 1.) dividing the number of units that the customer completes in the time period by the company standard or 2.) dividing the company standard (length of time to complete the job duty) by the length of time it takes the customer to complete the duty to arrive at the customer's production rate.

7

Long Term Supports

Long term supports represents one of the least analyzed, discussed, and researched components of supported employment. Yet, it remains one of supported employment's most unique and distinguishing features. Unlike other rehabilitation service options, the notion of terminating services at case closure, is never discussed in supported employment. Rather, supported employment seeks to establish and maintain consistent services and support over the longevity of an individual's employment tenure.

By definition, once a new employee is able to complete his or her job duties under the conditions of the natural environment, he or she moves into the final phase of supported employment known as long term supports. Long term supports are dependent upon the work that has occurred prior to this final phase of supported employment and focuses on the changing needs of the employee. Specifically, the information that has been gathered, relationships that have been built, training that has been conducted, services that have been delivered, and supports that have been utilized will determine the success or failure of this phase. At times, the customer and employment specialist will wait until the initiation of fading assistance, either at or away from the job site, to discuss and plan for long term supports. If this happens, then it becomes extremely probable that there will be difficulty for the customer, employer, and/or employment specialist during this phase. Fading assistance and instituting critical long term supports are two concepts that must be discussed from the very beginning of employment.

Today, supported employment is governed by new regulations and an ever increasing field of technology and support options. These options have expanded, and in some cases, changed our vision of long term supports. Supported employment customers, employers, and employment specialists now have access to an enhanced array of possible support options. These include new low and high assistive technology options, creative community and work place supports, federal work incentives, personal assistance services, person-centered planning techniques, and vouchers. However, these exciting options have increased the complexity of designing well developed plans of supports. In addition, establishing techniques for the systematic delivery and evaluation of the identified supports are of critical importance.

The remaining section of this chapter will focus on the best practices associated with planning, delivering, and evaluating the effectiveness of long term supports. Approaches, strategies, and techniques will be discussed to assist employment specialists in turning best practices into daily practices.

BEST PRACTICES

Long term support services are imperative for persons with significant disabilities to ensure their participation in today's work force and career advancement. The nature and amount of support will vary from person to person and business to business. Factors that influence both the level and the type of supports that are ultimately used by a customer are related to employment satisfaction, expanding job duties, and career development in a variety of corporate cultures.

The type and intensity of support required typically will change during an individual's employment tenure with a specific company. Generally, supports fall into one of two categories: 1) employment specific supports and 2) individual or community supports. Employment supports are those supports and/or services that are directly related to the employee's job. This may include such services as training, service coordination, orientation and mobility, employer and/or co-worker support, and assistive technology. Individual and community supports are supports that are arranged and delivered away from the workplace. They include areas that, if left unresolved, directly or indirectly impact employment stability. Supports in this category include housing and/or personal living situation, leisure, financial support, transportation, and relationships. Using research data from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment, the following table lists primary reasons for providing long terms supports. The items are arranged by the type of support provided most frequently during this phase of supported employment.

PRIMARY REASONS FOR PROVIDING LONG TERM SUPPORTS

1. Monitor work performance including work quality and work rate.
2. Facilitate job changes and career movement.
3. Crisis intervention.
4. Monitor socialization and overall integration.
5. Support training for employer and/ or co-workers.
6. Retraining of previously learned skills.
7. Assess job satisfaction.
8. Training in new skills.
9. Support to family.
10. Assess employer satisfaction.

SATISFACTION APPRAISAL

Maintaining regular contact with both the supported employee, as well as the supervisor and co-workers at the job site will be vital to long term success. Establishing a plan for regular communication will allow the employment specialist and the customer to be proactive in their approach to new situations and events. Life is a series of changes for all of us and employment is no exception. Business environments do not remain stable: supervisors leave; co-workers get transferred, building renovations occur, new equipment is bought, and work routines and job assignments change. Change is inevitable and should be embraced as positive. Quality services dictate that an employment specialist works closely with customers to plan for some of the predictable changes and to establish back-up plans and communication strategies for success.

Employee Satisfaction

Regular discussions with the customer, both at and away from the job site, regarding satisfaction and contentment with work will yield the best information. Customers with very limited language should not be excluded from these discussions, since they are able to express satisfaction, as well as, dissatisfaction through facial expressions and behavior. The employment specialist, with direction from the customer, also can meet and talk with the important people in the individual's life.

Conducting face-to-face interviews is only one way to gather important information. The employment specialist can make unobtrusive observations at the job site to review co-worker and supervisor interactions, confirm job duty analysis, verify production, and review personal leave records. Each of these sources can be rich in data and assist in the development of a proactive plan for support.

Supervisor Satisfaction

Once the individual has moved into the long term supports phase of supported employment, it should be clear which supervisor has authority over employee performance and review. After identifying the supervisor, the format and schedule for the company's employees' performance review process should be determined. In the event that evaluation is a regular part of the business establishment, the supported employment program should adhere to the typical company schedule. Additional meetings between the employment specialist, customer, and supervisor should occur regularly during the early phase of long term supports to solicit everyone's input and degree of satisfaction. Initially, these meetings will take the form of informal checks and will occur approximately every 2 weeks, if everything is going well. This contact should gradually fade to the mandatory twice monthly contacts or other appropriate schedule as determined by the needs and requests of each customer.

EXPANDING JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

In many cases, a new employee with a significant disability who has never worked before may be hired to perform a limited work scope. Yet, after working for several months, the now-experienced employee may be ready to expand her or his job duties. Generally, employees who enjoy a long tenure with a company will have their job duties or work responsibilities increased or expanded over time. This occurs naturally as employees seek to add variety to their daily routine and as employers begin to assess individual employee strengths. Employers will match and delegate new job responsibilities to their work force as the business grows and improves. A business should not view a customer associated with a supported employment program differently than any other employee. However, adding new job duties or responsibilities to an existing work routine may prove problematic for some individuals.

Approaching the expansion of job duties from a proactive stand point can prevent employee and employer frustration. The employment specialist can initiate these discussions with the customer and employer, and as a team identify areas for future expansion. Assisting the customer in developing a list of possible areas for growth gives the individual support to direct his or her career path and stay focused on goals and objectives rather than on a single job.

When job expansion occurs, the customer and employer may ask the employment specialist to return to the job site for a period of time. Depending upon the needs of the employee, she or he may require assistance with job reorganization, scheduling, skill acquisition, and/or production. It is important to remember that the decision to expand job duties is based upon the employee's desire and ability to increase his or her present work scope and the company's need or interest to increase work performance.

Becoming a valued member of a company's work force is important to all supported employment customers. Expanding job responsibilities is an excellent way to accomplish this goal. However, this requires a commitment on the part of the employment specialist to be thinking about this from the point of hire. Typically, the most successful placements are the ones which have co-workers and employers providing the needed support and assistance directly to the customer. Yet, the employment specialist must continue to work with the individual to analyze support options, to select the most feasible ones, and then to evaluate the effectiveness of the type and level of support provided.

CAREERS

As discussed in the previous sections of this manual, supported employment is not just about obtaining and maintaining a job. It is about identifying and pursuing a career. This career process begins during the customer profile and job acquisition phases of supported employment and remains a focal point throughout the entire process. During the long term supports phase, the customer reconvenes her or his employment support team to identify and evaluate further work that needs accomplishing. Part of this process will include revisiting or re-evaluating previously identified career interests, dreams, and goals.

An individual who obtains the "right job", in the "right company", and on the first try is extremely rare. Generally, an individual who is new to the labor market or who is attempting to re-enter the labor force after an injury will seek to gain several different work experiences over a period of time. The accumulated work history is then used to identify career goals. However, career development is only one reason why a person accepts an employment position. There are numerous other reasons; not the least of these is a paycheck.

Therefore, while a supported employment customer may accept an employment position and perform well at his or her job, additional career supports may be necessary. When supported employment programs ask customers to dream and to identify career interests and desires, there is an obligation and responsibility to follow-up with each customer. On-going supports must be offered to determine if dreams and career interests are being met or if personal goals and interests have changed.

For example, Mary Beth, a supported employment customer, accepted a position at a local grocery store; however, her dream was to work at a health spa. After working for several months at the grocery store, Mary Beth decided that she really liked her job and had become aware of many employment opportunities available within the store chain. At a follow-up employment meeting she shared new dreams and career aspirations and together the employee and employment specialist discussed potential career interests with her current employer. They developed a new plan for career advancement that was included as part of Mary Beth's long term support plan.

MONITORING & COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS

The development of strategies that ensure the maintenance of past, present, and future supports is vital to the continuing job success of supported employment customers. Regardless of the type and number of supports that are in place throughout the individual's employment tenure, provisions for the extended coordination and monitoring of the supports must occur. Developing a well established plan for long term supports with the customer ensures that the necessary supports are maintained.

There are many different factors that can affect the quality and stability of an established support to include changes in a customer's needs and preferences, a new supervisor, co-workers resigning, change or redesign in a workstation, and so forth. Change in any one of these critical areas could result in an interruption of work routine or work quality. When these issues are left unaddressed, job termination can occur.

Key features of a long term support plan include clear delineation of responsibilities, specific schedule for monitoring, and a stable point of contact that can temporarily provide services to the customer in the event that a community or work place support becomes ineffective. Vital to this plan is the careful documentation of pertinent customer-specific information such as identification of necessary supports, status of the supports, list of potential options to meet the needs, customer preference, including a primary and a backup, and, if necessary, additional support resource. Typically, the employment specialist, working with the customer, serves as the stable point of contact for all long term supports. The following table overviews key ingredients for a long term support plan.

FEATURES OF A LONG TERM SUPPORT PLAN

1. Documentation of Support Need
2. Identification of Need Areas
3. Confirmation of Current Status of Needs
4. Description of Potential Options to Meet Needs
5. Substantiation of Customer Support Option Preference
6. Selection of Primary Support
7. Designation of Back-up Support
8. Identification of Additional Resources

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) have been part of the corporate world since the latter part of the 19th century. However, it wasn't until the 1970's that these programs broadened their range of service options and began to develop comprehensive plans for company employees. Today, EAPs have developed a variety of services to include child/elder care, retirement options, fitness and health maintenance programs, counseling, drug or AIDS testing and supports. In general, EAPs can be described as company supports for employees in resolving personal and family issues. These programs offer assistance and in some cases, a remedy designed to support workers in maintaining that delicate balance of roles and responsibilities between work and home life.

While EAPs appear to be a valuable resource for many customers in supported employment, these programs remain underutilized by employees with significant disabilities. Providing these services to all employees, EAPs have the potential to reduce the stigma that may be associated with a local disability organization designed to provide many of the same services. In addition, using EAPs can serve to increase the integration of supported employment customers into the general employee population and potentially increase the range of services offered.

Typically, EAP service information is disseminated during an employee orientation meeting or simply handed to the employee when tax forms are signed. For many customers, the information will not be provided in an accessible format and therefore is often discarded. The employment specialist can assist the customer by including EAPs as a potential source for many vital work place supports. However, follow-up investigation should occur to determine the strengths and limitations of each support option available through the EAP. This will provide an opportunity for the customer to direct this process and to make proactive decisions regarding the use of EAP services prior to the need arising.

Yet, in the case of most employees, EAP information and services are typically left undiscovered until an employee has an aimedate need for a particular service. This was the case for Jane, a thirty year old woman who sustained a brain injury as a result of a car accident. Jane had been a supported employment customer working for a large national retail corporation as a gift wrapper when a co-worker and the employment specialist noticed a marked change in her behavior. Some of the behavioral changes that were noted included a pattern of mood swings, weight loss, and an inability to focus on her job duties. The employment specialist spoke to Jane and her sister about this behavior pattern. As a result of this meeting, they agreed to contact the county mental health and substance abuse program which Jane had attended sporadically for substance abuse services.

On the following day Jane's co-workers presented her with a packet of information about the company's EAP. Listed among the array of available services was psychotherapy and substance abuse counseling. In the end, Jane decided that she would use her company's EAP services, because they were provided at a local medical center and were part of her employee benefit package.

EMPLOYMENT MENTOR

As discussed earlier in this section, business settings are dynamic. Change is going to occur. The job of the employment specialist is to work with the employee to plan for predictable changes in the employment setting. New management is one of the most predictable changes that will occur in most job settings. Before reviewing strategies for a proactive approach to dealing with new management, it is critical to understand why this factor can lead to the termination of a customer.

If the customer and the employment specialist have been successful, the employer will be an integral partner in the customer's employment. In most situations, the manager has received the supported employment marketing materials, agreed to a thorough job analysis, hired the customer, assisted in problem solving work issues, and observed the skill acquisition process. In general, the manager takes on a mentoring role with the customer. This is an important factor and is the product of establishing an excellent rapport between the manager, the employee, and the employment specialist.

As with any partnership or team-work situation, when a valued member of the group leaves, the loss has a serious impact on the remaining members. This is clearly the situation in supported employment. Many employment specialists refer to a customer's supervisor as the employment mentor or job site advocate. This is not surprising for all the reasons that were listed above. Therefore, strategies need to be developed to reduce the loss and potential negative side effects of a change in management and/or mentor.

One of the best strategies that an employment specialist can develop is maintaining a strong communication network with the manager. Sharing issues and concerns with the mentor-manager regarding change of management and its impact on the employment stability of the customer, is an important first step. This should be done in all cases, even in employment situations where the potential for management transfer or job change appears remote. Begin by requesting that the manager inform the customer and/or employment specialist when a transfer is being discussed or is scheduled. If this happens with approximately two weeks notice the customer and the employment specialist can work together to develop a plan. A variety of creative strategies can be developed and implemented to address this change. However, it will be important to ensure that the strategies match the corporate culture and are respectful of the new manager's time. Therefore, when developing strategies, do not leave the mentor-manager out of the planning process. The following is a process that has proven to be useful for many supported employment customers who have been confronted with the loss of an employment mentor.

CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT

1. Ask the manager for ideas on addressing this issue.
2. Ensure that all supervisor evaluations have been filed in personnel file.
3. Ask the "old" manager to write a letter of recommendation.
4. Develop a plan for marketing supported employment to the new manager.
5. Develop brief packets of supported employment materials.
6. Implement plan during the manager's first week on the job.
7. Evaluate effects of marketing plan.
8. Revise plan as needed.

FUNDING SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Obtaining and maintaining funding for the long term supports and services of a customer in supported employment is an important and complex issue. Funding of long term supports is **important**, because it ultimately determines the retention strategies that are utilized for supporting the career advancement of a supported employment customer. In addition, funding is an extremely **complex** issue, because it requires collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies.

A wide variety of services and funding approaches are possible for the long term supports component of supported employment, often referred to as extended services by state vocational rehabilitation services. Combinations of these approaches are increasingly used across states and within local communities by customers and individual providers as alternative resources are identified.

Utilizing a mixture of new, existing, and natural resources can reduce the burden on any service system or provider. Yet, using these resources successfully necessitates flexibility in service and funding structures due to policy and procedural differences across funding resources. This will mean adjustments in activities, service fees, or payment approaches for supported employment service providers.

Differences in individual support needs and funding resources will require creativity in how, and from whom, services are purchased and provided. Diversity and flexibility within approaches to long term supports facilitates access to new dollars, use of non-traditional resources, and expansion of ongoing service capacity.

Essentially, funding models come in all different shapes and sizes and are typically tied to the mission, goals, and objectives of supported employment organizations and/or agencies. Key to establishing the appropriate mix of long terms supports with customers is understanding the following five concepts defining a successful employment experience.

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES INCLUDES:

1. Satisfying Work;
2. Mutually Enjoyable and Supportive Relationships;
3. Career Advancement;
4. Improved Resources; and
5. Reduced Reliance on the Service System.

Federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) dollars are the largest single source of funding for supported employment services. These funds are typically used to pay for the initial training phase and continue until the supported employment customer reaches employment stabilization. The Rehabilitation Act restricts the use of these funds for long term supports.

State vocational rehabilitation agencies define supported employment stabilization in many different ways across the country. Essentially, stabilization and ultimately VR case closure will be related to the achievement of the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) goals and the customer's ability to maintain employment performance with limited assistance from the employment specialist. However, a level of continuous assistance is maintained for at least twice monthly checks from the employment specialist. A resourceful supported employment service provider will need to develop a multiple of funding sources to assist in maintaining supports and services at the level that is necessary to successfully maintain employment satisfaction among customers.

In order to meet the growing demand for long term supports and services, new sources of funding must be identified and utilized. All existing service funding must be re-analyzed to determine if resources, services, and funding can be re-directed for the funding of long term supports. This needs to occur at all levels of government and service delivery. The following two examples demonstrate how this can be done on a service level and a state level.

Case Study Examples of Redirecting Services and Resources

Case Study: Redirection of Organizational Resources

Mark, his employment specialist, and the supported employment program manager realized that Mark's long term support needs would, at times, be greater than his financial resources (PASS and other community supports). They recognized that other funding would be needed. The day program that Mark attended prior to employment had two staff responsible for 15 individuals. This support generally occurred at the program site, but individual off-site services had been provided on occasion. The day program is funded by the local mental health/mental retardation agency which purchases days of attendance by individuals. Mark's funding averaged about 12 days per month. The organization decided that these funds could be used to purchase 3 hours a week of day program support staff time for Mark. This support would be provided away from Mark's employment site, but was necessary for maintaining employment. These funds would be coordinated to supplement job coaching services covered by his PASS.

(Rheinheimer et al., 1993)

Case Study: Redirection of State Level Resources and Funding

In the early 1990's, the state of Oregon recognized the need to expand the long term support options for supported employment customers. To accomplish this goal, the State Developmental Disability office incorporated strong policy language for integrated employment as the option of choice. Long term supports were determined as a priority area along with the proactive encouragement for the conversion of segregated facilities to integrated community employment. Many different steps have been taken to encourage and support these policy decisions to include the redirection of funds to provide for incentives grants aimed at facilitating partnerships with providers, statewide forums on long term supports, and the development of flexible funding and service arrangements with providers.

(M. Holsapple, personal communication, 11/16/96).

FUNDING SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

To effectively serve supported employment customers, employment specialists must become extremely knowledgeable about the vast array of possible funding sources and the strengths and weaknesses of each resource. Developing this knowledge base will allow the employment specialist and customer to select the best combination of long term support resources that specifically match the customer's needs. Identifying and utilizing alternative resources involves the work of many individuals. There remains no single source of funding which supports everyone in need. This would be neither practical nor advisable. Collaboration efforts are essential for the ultimate growth of funding and resources. This section presents some overview information on an array of possible funding sources, a short description of each, and specific advantages and possible limitations of each identified funding resources.

State Mental Health Mental Retardation Agencies

The State Mental Health Mental Retardation Agency is the single most significant contributor to long term funding of supported employment services. The growth in these funds has been dramatic over the last several years. Continued growth will be found in reallocating existing resources to supported employment by defining integrated employment as the option of choice. The funds available through this agency are the traditional source of long term funding for people with mental retardation, mental illness, and other developmental disabilities. Funds cannot be accessed by persons who do not experience a developmental disability (i.e., brain injury, physical disability, sensory disability).

Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Program

This program is a waiver, applied for by states, that allows federal Medicaid money to be spent on community-based rather than institutionally-based services. The states must pay a match percentage that varies from state to state, from 20% to 50%. To be eligible an individual with developmental disabilities must have been institutionalized in the past.

This program is the largest source of federal funding for on-going specialized services to people with developmental disabilities. It can be used for initial training or long term supports. Many fears and myths exist about the program, such as complexity and predictability.

Social Security Work Incentives — Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

These work incentives are available through the Social Security Administration. They allow a person with a disability to set aside income or resources to pay for costs associated with reaching an educational or vocational objective. For example, funds may be used for paying job coaches.

IRWE's are job-related expenses that enable an individual to work. PASS & IRWE can assist an individual to purchase employment supports. Having the power to purchase services gives an individual greater control of the service and reduces the reliance on other funding systems. These incentives offer a possible alternative for purchasing long term services for individuals who are on waiting lists and who have no other funding sources.

Individuals must make enough money to warrant the use of the incentives and the plans have to be approved by Social Security. Sometimes it is easier to use a PASS plan for initial job placement than for long-term support, since it is time limited.

State Legislatures

Some states have been successful and effective in securing funds from their legislatures by developing advocacy coalitions to request funding for supported employment. Legislators are interested in letters and calls from their constituency as well as good, reliable data to support requests. Collaboration among advocacy groups is important to avoid mixed messages and to ensure a successful outcome.

Once the legislation is passed and funds have been allocated in the state budget bills, funding is usually stable. It also allows the state rehabilitation agency to assist with long term supports for underserved populations such as individuals with physical or sensory disabilities. Some states are continuing to face serious shortages and limited resources at a time when most states do not want to raise taxes to cover the additional costs. In some areas, coalitions are hard to build and legislative contact is a time consuming process for everyone concerned.

Job Training Partnership Act

This program is designed to reduce welfare dependency and increase employment and earnings of youth, unskilled adults, the economically disadvantaged, individuals with disabilities, and others facing serious barriers to em-ployment. Funding is available at the local level through the Private Industry Councils (PIC's) to establish job assistance and training programs.

Once supported employment programs have a contract and are showing successful outcomes, funding usually continues. Programs can use the money for job coach salaries and provide initial training, as well as follow-up services. However, there are no assurances of funding from year to year. Funding decisions are based on the needs of the locality and amount of dollars from the federal government.

Business Supports

Companies are gaining greater experience in dealing with a more diverse work force. Employers are becoming aware of the wise investment of hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers who make decisions that they can train individuals, re-structure jobs, and manage the day-to-day activities of employees with disabilities, typically rely on the employment specialist as a consultant. Supports that are provided by the employer to other employees should also be extended to workers with disabilities (*Employee Assistance Programs*).

If the customer can access business supports, then typically he or she will require less intervention from the external service system. Generally, this increases reliance on co-workers, and produces a "typical" work environment for the worker with a disability. However, some employers might not be able to handle the array of supports needed by some workers with significant disabilities. Back-up plans must not be overlooked by the rehabilitation and provider agency representatives.

Community Supports

There are numerous community resources which can be tapped for assistance with long term supports for individuals with severe disabilities in supported employment. Churches, volunteer groups and agencies, college internship programs, local transportation funds, civic groups, friends and neighbors are all local supports to explore for assistance. A positive feature of using community supports is that they are local and exist to be of assistance to individuals who have specific needs. Rules and eligibility issues usually are not a problem. When identifying a community support, the employment specialist needs to realize that some local community programs have limited resources and serve only a particular group.

Centers for Independent Living

In the 1980's federal funds were given to state rehabilitation agencies to assist people with disabilities to become more independent in their lives, including vocationally. Funds are available through the Federal Rehabilitation Act, Title VII-A, B,& C. Title A is to be used to establish Independent Living State Councils. Title B is for services. Title C is for the establishment of Independent Living Centers (ILC). Each local IL board decides how the funds are spent, and who will be served. Title B funds can be allocated for supported employment services for individuals with disabilities.

This is a good source of local funds for supported employment and long term support services. If approved by the local board, any disability group may be approved for services. However, Centers for Independent Living have to gain their board's approval to provide employment services. Some ILC's don't have an abundance of funds, and may show resistance using the funds for supported employment services.

Small Business Tax Credit

This tax credit is for small businesses which incur expenses for providing access to individuals with disabilities. The amount of credit is 50% of eligible expenses for the year that are more than $250 but not more than $10,250. The maximum amount of credit is $5,000 per year. Eligible small businesses are those with either $1 million or less in gross receipts for the preceding tax year, or 30 or fewer full-time employees during the preceding tax year. Businesses can recover some cost of providing a coach, mentor, assistant, etc. to a person with a severe disability at the job site. Previously unused credit may be used in an earlier or later year, but not before a tax year ending November 5, 1990.

Education Resources

State and federal dollars are available through vocational and technical programs and adult basic education programs. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 offers states opportunities to assure equal access to vocational programs for students with disabilities. This program offers a wide range of integrated and supportive services to help individuals obtain and/or maintain employment. Curriculum can be adjusted. Training activities can make it possible to use vocational education dollars to provide long term supported employment services. However, rules and administrative policies sometime make it difficult for students with disabilities to access these funds.

Private and Community Foundations

Many private foundations across the country provide grants to service organizations for program development, education, and employment. Some are more interested in start-up activities, but many are interested in long term success, follow-up activities, career enhancement and business assistance to entrepreneurs with disabilities. Community foundations are not as abundant but are available in some areas. Foundations are supported by private donations and public interest and may be more willing to fund risky projects than private foundations.

Private and community foundations can be excellent sources for start-up costs while exploring other long term resources. A variety of projects can be funded with these dollars. Some are geared to a specific target group and selected geographic areas. The research and development of these resources requires a large amount of time from staff.

Private Rehabilitation and Insurance

Individuals who are injured workers may be paid up to a year while receiving training and support in order to return to productive activity. Insurance companies that want individuals to return to work quickly may deliver their own vocational services or purchase them from other agencies such as a supported employment provider. If there is settlement of a case, there could be a life-care plan which includes supported employment services. The duration of services for an individual can be over a period of years. Settlement costs could cover long term supported employment for the life of one person.

Private insurance companies may not understand the role of supported employment service providers. Insurance may push for quick results and not care as much about quality and customer choice.

Veteran's Administration Special Training Benefits

The Veteran's Administration has funds for training known as "Special Training Benefits." These benefits are for disabled veterans and children of disabled or deceased veterans. Each VA office has a rehabilitation specialists who understands this program. VA will fund long term support until an individual reaches 95% independence from an employment specialist presence. The money is paid to the individual who then pays the support provider directly. This arrangement gives the individual more choice in selecting a vendor. Some VA offices may not be familiar with supported employment. Time may be needed to secure approval and there may be a four year time limit.

Federal and State Assistance

Financial assistance for various projects are available from the state, federal, and sometimes local government. Federal grants can be written to offer technical assistance, or develop and demonstrate new approaches for long term supports. State agencies provide incentive monies for pilot projects which demonstrate innovative strategies that can be replicated across the state. The Developmental Disabilities Planning Councils, State Rehabilitation Agencies, and Mental Health & Mental Retardation Agencies are examples of federal and state programs.

Funding is available for creative approaches and usually spans long periods of time. After initial funding, services can be built into other existing delivery mechanisms. This requires a cooperative effort between agencies and local organizations. However, keeping abreast of available grants and possible requests for proposals with varying due dates is time consuming.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The employment specialist must consider many factors when providing long term supports to persons with significant disabilities. Regardless of the customer's type or level of disability, the employment specialist should stay abreast of customer satisfaction, employer satisfaction, expansion of job duties, career goals, coordination of supports, mentors, employee assistance programs, and funding. The following portion of this chapter will give strategies for implementing a customer-driven approach to long term supports.

Developing a Plan

The employment specialist can use formal and informal methods to develop a long term supports plan. Informal methods may include conversations with the customer, supervisor, co-workers, and family members, as well as any additional individuals who have agreed to provide supports either at or away from the job site. Formal records should also exist that describe past, present, and future areas of the customer's needs as well as strategies for supports. Once developed, these records must be maintained throughout the individual's employment tenure. These documents can provide a record of customer preferences and successful support strategies. The form at the end of this chapter is a planning tool that may be useful in assisting customers and their support teams in identifying and maintaining a permanent account of support needs.

Identification of Customer's Needs

The process of identifying a community access or support need begins by engaging the customer in discussions to document personal preferences, concerns, and future directions. The customer's career plan, developed prior to employment, will be an important tool to guide these discussions. This employment plan should contain career goals and objectives, as well as the names of people who have expressed an interest in supporting the individual to achieve his or her personal ambitions. The customer can reconvene his or her employment support team throughout the long term support phase of supported employment to celebrate successes and to provide needed supports.

Hopefully, the employer and co-workers have become part of the individual's support team as contributing team members. If this has not occurred, the employment specialist and customer must determine the employer's and co-workers' perceptions of current and future support needs. This can be accomplished by arranging a meeting to obtain this information.

As stated in other sections, it is important for the customer to lead any meeting with the employer. Obviously, the customer's participation in discussions about her or his support needs is an important component in the customer-driven process. Setting this expectation will reduce possible confusion for the employer related to the customer's roles and responsibilities. In the event that the customer is not interested in leading meetings, he or she should attend to ensure that his or her views are represented. The table below summarizes points to remember for identifying the customer's support needs.

IDENTIFICATION OF CUSTOMER'S NEEDS

- Ask the customer.
- Review customer's career plan.
- Ensure that career plan is current.
- Discuss the support needs with the customer, employer, co-workers, and other members of the support team.
- Talk with family members about their expectations and concerns.
- Review previous need areas.
- Update the support plan with a list of past, current, and future needs.

Brainstorming Options

Once past, present, and future supports have been documented, it is time to begin the process of brainstorming possible options for each of the current needs on the list. This can be accomplished by organizing a small group of interested individuals to participate in a brain storming meeting. The objective of the session is to generate as many ideas as possible for the identified support needs.

In most cases, a brainstorming group will consist of the customer's employment support team. Sessions should be limited to 12 individuals, however; 5-6 people are usually present. Participants should be comfortable and arranged in a circle or semi-circle with an area for a group facilitator and recorder.

The location of the meeting is left up to the customer. However, the supported employment organization's meeting room is not recommended. The idea is to make this a planning session of support and not an evaluation of the customer. All ideas are accepted by the group; this is a creative process, and members should not limit themselves.

If it is impossible to organize a small group to brainstorm solutions, then the customer and the employment specialist can work together to review and build upon all resources that were identified during the customer profile phase. They can use such instruments as the community analysis and the customer profile form. In addition, the customer should list all the supports that she or he is currently using. Family members, also should be approached to determine other possible ideas for support options. Finally, it is critical to analyze the supports that the employment setting has to offer. From this process, the customer, employment specialist, and employer can generate a list of options.

Choosing a Support Option

Once a comprehensive list is generated, it is time for the customer to select the preferred support option(s). The employment specialist can begin this process by reviewing and explaining each of the support options that appears on the list. Regardless of the individual's disability, it is useful to have concrete examples and experiences to assist the customer in making a choice. As the employment specialist, employer, and/or others participating in the process review each option, an unbiased attempt should be made to give the pros, cons, and consequences of each choice. This would assist the customer in rank ordering the options in a most to least favorable hierarchy.

Many factors may influence the selection process, such as the immediate availability of the support and the ability to identify a primary and backup plan specific to each high-ranking support option. For example, Tom needed to review his long term support options for transportation, because he was preparing to move into an apartment of his own. Prior to Tom's move, he had lived at home with his parents, and his father provided daily transportation to and from work. During an employment support planning meeting, all support options were reviewed and Tom selected riding public transportation. Tom's brother offered to assist him in learning how to ride the city bus, and his father agreed to provide transportation as a backup strategy in the event of a problem. Tom always wanted to ride the bus to work, but his father preferred driving Tom. During his planning meeting, Tom shared with the employment specialist and family members that he had selected an apartment near the bus stop so that he could ride the bus like everyone else.

In this example, a dependable primary support option was identified along with backup support. Judging from Tom's closing statement, his apartment selection was, in part, motivated by the location of the city bus stop. Therefore, the employment specialist can feel confident that riding public transportation is clearly Tom's support option preference. Before closing the meeting, the employment specialist began to assist in confirming roles, responsibilities, costs, and time commitment. In Tom's case, his brother would provide the primary support of teaching Tom to ride the bus. Tom's brother took the employment specialist's phone number to call her in case he had a problem. The employment specialist agreed to meet Tom and his brother in one week to ensure that Tom was learning to ride the bus independently.

If key support persons did not participate in the meeting, the employment specialist should contact each person involved to determine their interest in providing support. Many times, individuals will express an interest in wanting to provide assistance. However, it is the employment specialist's responsibility to ensure that the support person understands and accepts the responsibility. The employment specialist needs to provide the assistance that is requested by the customer, as well as necessary to ensure success. For example, in the case of Tom and his brother the employment specialist provided the following: 1) a bus schedule with the most efficient route to Tom's job from his house, 2) information on cost for riding a bus, 3) a brief task analysis for riding the bus, 4) safety tips and rules of etiquette for riding a city bus which had been published by the bus company, and 5) a telephone paging system to contact the employment specialist in the event of a problem. In this example, the employment specialist left nothing to chance.

Determining Level of Support

Determining the level of support needed by the customer will be critically important in selecting the support option and/or the delivery of the support or service. The overall guiding rule governing all interactions should be to: **move from the least intrusive to the most intrusive level of support.** An employment specialist should not provide any more assistance than the customer actually needs. The previous chapter on systematic instruction presented a process for providing the least amount of assistance and a method for tracking results. This same philosophy should guide interactions when selecting long term supports and services.

Sometimes the needed level of long term support gets confusing, because the identification of a support or service is occurring due to a presenting problem and/or crisis. Once the plan is implemented, the employment specialist must monitor the situation closely. Careful evaluation of the plan will be critical for long term success.

Long Term Supports Case Study

In Brad's junior year of high school, he sustained a brain injury. Following his injury, he dropped out of high school and did not return to obtain his diploma. As a result of the injury, Brad experiences a variety of cognitive disabilities including short term memory difficulties, impulsive behavior, and mobility challenges. During Brad's nine month rehabilitation, he progressed from using a wheelchair, to walking with a cane. Currently, he walks very slowly and experiences poor balance; however, he is not interested in using assistive mobility devices.

Prior to his injury, Brad worked part-time as a gas station attendant. After dropping out of high school, Brad found employment at several different community businesses. Each of these jobs lasted between one to three months, before Brad quit or was fired by his employer. Some of the reasons which were given for terminating employment included change of residence, better job, and verbal aggression towards the employer.

For the past six months, Brad has been successfully employed as a parking attendant with the assistance of supported employment services. Brad had minimal obstacles learning the necessary skills associated with his job; he reached 100% accuracy by the third week of employment. However, Brad has worked on a variety of support issues that have a direct impact on his work attitude, quality, and production to include: 1) financial concerns, 2) domestic difficulties, 3) taking instruction from female co-workers, 4) inappropriate touching of female employees, and 5) verbal aggression when under pressure.

Presently, Brad is satisfied with his employment situation, and his employer just gave him an above average employee performance evaluation. Brad's vocational rehabilitation counselor has talked to him about terminating services due to Brad's consistent work performance. In preparation of closing his VR case, Brad called a meeting of his employment support group. The group included his girlfriend, mother, father, neighbor, employer, a co-worker, rehabilitation counselor, and his employment specialist. Under Brad's direction, his employment support group developed the following long term support plan.

BRAD'S LONG TERM SUPPORT PLAN

Identified Need: Financial Concerns

1. Over the last three months Brad has not had enough money to pay his share of the monthly rent.
2. Social Security will need to be informed when Brad's income changes.
3. Adaptive devices can be purchased by using the Social Security Work Incentive Program.

Potential Options:

1. Budgeting support from: girlfriend, brother, employment specialist, or Uncle John who works with the local banker.
2. Social Security: Brad or Brad's father sends a form letter, designed by the employment specialist, to Social Security with a copy of Brad's most recent pay stub.

Customer Preference:

1. Brad would like his brother to assist him with the development of a budget. The least acceptable option is for his girlfriend, mother, or father to know how much money he has or the amount of his monthly bills.
2. Brad will contact Social Security when income increases or decreases.
3. Employment specialist will assist Brad with accessing the Social Security Work Incentive Program if needed.

Primary Support:

Brad's brother, Jack Smith 980-1651, has agreed to develop a monthly budget with Brad and pay bills with him on the 1st and 15th of every month.

Back-up Support:

The employment specialist, Martha Stone beeper number 770-8900 (leave a voice message), will provide back-up support to Brad and his brother as needed.

Status (check one):

__ Past
_x_ Present
__ Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

__ Title 19
__ Medicaid
__ MR Services
__ Other (specify: ______________________

__ MH Services
_x_ SSA (attach
__ VR State Funding

Identified Need: Domestic difficulties

Three months ago, Brad moved out of his parent's home and into an apartment with his girlfriend and her 9 year old daughter. Some domestic difficulties have been related to:

1. sharing household expenses,
2. respecting people's need for privacy, and
3. using vulgar language.

Potential Options:

1. Obtain counseling support from local clinic.
2. Ask for family support from mother and father.
3. Get together with mutual friends who are in relationships to discuss relationships, and
4. Look into Employee Assistance Program.

Customer Preference:

Brad agreed to check out the EAP services at his place of employment. In addition, Brad and his girlfriend have agreed to check out support from a local clinic and talk with friends who are in similar living situations.

Primary Support:

EAP, Personnel Office, 2114 Drake Street, or local clinic at 1925 Chester Street, 828-2194. Brad and his girlfriend independently deal with domestic issues.

Back-Up Support:

The employment specialist will provide back-up support for accessing information if Brad has any trouble. Martha Stone's beeper number is 770-890 (leave a voice message).

Status (check one):
__ Past
__ Present
__ Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

__ Title 19
__ Medicaid
__ MR Services
__ Other (specify: ______________________
____

__ MH Services
__ SSA (attach
__ VR State Funding

Identified Need: Taking instruction from female co-worker, inappropriate touching of female co-workers and verbal aggression when under pressure.

Two months ago, Brad had an incident where he refused to listen to a co-worker who was relaying a message from his employer. On the same day the female co-worker yelled at Brad after he touched her back side in the employee break room. To date, Brad's verbal aggression has been limited to the one occasion with the same female coworker.

Potential Options:

1. Set up a mentor program to address employee and customer relations.
2. Sign contract with clear company consequences.
3. Find a job where Brad does not have any female coworkers.

Customer Preference:

Enter a mentor program.

Primary Support:

Employer Mark Adams: 817-2231
Coworker Jack Smith: 817-2259
Mentoring will begin two weeks from today with a weekly evaluation.

Back-Up Support:

The employment specialist will assist with providing training to the mentor.

Status (check one):
__ Past
__ Present
__ Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

__ Title 19
__ Medicaid
__ MR Services
__ Other (specify: ______________________
____

__ MH Services
__ SSA (attach
__ VR State Funding

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

At some point in time, the customer may be terminated from employment or may choose to leave his or her job. When this occurs, it can be very beneficial to conduct an exit interview. During this time, the customer, employer, program manager, rehabilitation counselor, and employment specialist can review the entire employment experience to determine the events that led to job separation. This information may be useful for the customer and/or employment specialist as they develop proactive strategies for future employment opportunities. In some cases, a contract can be drawn up and implemented when the individual returns to work again. Using this type of process, a customer who was dissatisfied with the delivery of services could ensure that future service would be shaped by the contract. If the supported employment service provider was not satisfied with the customer's performance, this too could be addressed through a contract. In both cases, the rehabilitation counselor may have suggestions for increased efficiency and improved outcomes that may be addressed directly with the customer; for the performance of the employment specialist or the supported employment agency.

SUMMARY

The form on the following page can be used for identifying, selecting, and tracking long term supports. Employment specialists and customers should begin using this form from the beginning of employment. However, during the long term supports component of supported employment, this form can be invaluable. In some supported employment programs, the individual who provides the initial support services to the customer may not be the person who is assisting him or her during the long term supports component. Ensuring that all successful and unsuccessful supports, services, and strategies are charted from the beginning will help to guarantee a smooth transition between professionals with all parties committed to a customer-driven process.

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APPENDIX

- **Long Term Supports Plan**

Long Term Supports Plan

Person with overall monitoring responsibilities: ______________________ **Date Completed:** ______________

Name: ______________________ SS#: ______________

Address: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

____

Employer: ______________________ Supervisor: ______________

Address: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

______________________ Hire Date: ______________

Rehabilitation Counselor: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

Case Manager: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

Employment Specialist: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

School Personnel: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

Other: ______________________ Telephone #: ______________

Identified Need:
Potential Options:
Customer Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-up Support:

Status (check one):

___ Past
___ Present
___ Future

Identification of Funding Sources (check one):

___ Title 19
___ Medicaid
___ MR Services
___ Other (specify) ______________________________

___ MH Services
___ SSA (attach)
___ VR State Funding

Identified Need:

Potential Options:

Customer Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-Up Support:

Status (check one): ___ Past ___ Present ___ Future	***Identification of Funding Source (check one):*** ___ Title 19 ___ MH Services ___ Medicaid ___ SSA (attach) ___ MR Services ___ VR State Funding ___ Other (specify) ________________ ________________
Identified Need:	
Potential Options:	
Customer Preference:	
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Status (check one): ___ Past ___ Present ___ Future	***Identification of Funding Source (check one):*** ___ Title 19 ___ MH Services ___ Medicaid ___ SSA (attach) ___ MR Services ___ VR State Funding ___ Other (specify) ________________ ________________

8

Quality Supported Employment Services

QUALITY SERVICES

Several public laws passed in the early 1990's recognize the absolute right of persons with significant disabilities to live and work as integral and valued members of society. The Americans with Disabilities Act (P.L. 101-336) sets as public policy the principle of full integration of persons with disabilities. No longer can individuals with disabilities be excluded from the education, employment, and cultural opportunities that exist in all communities across the country. The 1992 Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 102-569) and the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476) provide persons with disabilities the rights of access to education, rehabilitation, and related services and supports critical to their achieving the quality of life envisioned by the ADA.

These significant pieces of legislation put the abilities and choices of persons with disabilities first in the planning and the delivery of services. Legislation has challenged rehabilitation professionals to assist individuals with disabilities as they work toward making ***meaningful*** and ***informed*** choices in establishing plans of services that emphasize community integrated employment and related outcomes. This challenge to rehabilitation professionals coincides with the tremendous national growth in supported employment over the last decade.

People with significant disabilities are now seeking to achieve the promise of ADA and to utilize the services and supports established in public legislation. Yet, they are expressing concerns about the quality of services provided by local and state disability and rehabilitation agencies and the difficulties in achieving a clear sense of ***informed choice*** in the selection of services.

Defining Informed Choice

Webster's dictionary defines **choice** as "the act of choosing; selection; the right, power, or chance to choose; option; **choice** implies the chance, right, or power to choose, usually by free exercise of one's judgment." If the definition is explored further, the following information can be found:

1) **Option** suggests the privilege of choosing as granted by a person or group in authority that normally exercises power.

2) ***Alternative*** in the strict usage, limits a choice to one of two possibilities.

3) ***Selection*** implies a wide choice and the exercise of careful discrimination.

While this may seem a matter of semantics, it is interesting to think about these definitions in relationship to the services provided by supported employment programs. Are programs giving their customers the "privilege" of choosing based on professional authority? Do employment specialists simply provide two alternatives and force their customers to choose the one which may be the lesser of two evils? Or, are customers truly provided a selection of choices and assisted in carefully discriminating between their choices?

Fortunately, the ideas and suggestions of people with significant disabilities are beginning to impact the field of rehabilitation, including supported employment. Many programs are now using a customer-driven approach to supported employment, which is shaping service delivery practices. Supported employment customers are entering into partnerships with their rehabilitation counselors, supported employment service providers, employment specialists, and employers to define quality service indicators. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the importance of these partnerships is through the eyes of John, a supported employment customer, who is attempting to obtain employment.

John's Case Study

John is a young man who experiences a dual sensory disability and moderate difficulties in learning new skills as a result of a brain injury. He has expressed an interest in obtaining employment in his community. John's sister assisted him in applying for state vocational rehabilitation services, and he subsequently was determined eligible to receive services with a recommendation for supported employment. In an initial meeting, John's rehabilitation counselor discussed the rehabilitation services that he would need to obtain employment. The counselor concluded the meeting by telling John the name of a local supported employment program that would provide him the necessary supports to obtain and maintain employment.

Following the meeting, a friend of John's told him the name of another supported employment provider that had been very successful in assisting several people with dual sensory disabilities to get and keep a job. At church, a woman gave John the name of a third supported employment agency where she knew the president and was willing to put in a good word for him. With the names of three supported employment organizations, John was more confused than ever. He didn't know which service provider would be the best agency to assist him in finding a job.

Remembering how his sister found a college, John called his rehabilitation counselor and asked if she could arrange for him to visit the supported employment providers that she identified, as well as the other two organizations that friends had recommended. After the rehabilitation counselor assisted John with setting up three interviews, the two of them developed a list of questions that would assist him in making an informed choice. During each of the three informal meetings, John asked the following six questions.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many job coaches do you employ, and how many customers do you assist in finding jobs each year?
2. What types of jobs are being developed by your agency?
3. What is the average weekly wage for your customers?
4. What is the ratio of supported employment staff to customers ?
5. How long do your customers keep their jobs?
6. What long term supports do you offer customers?

The answers to these questions gave John and his rehabilitation counselor information that was helpful in making informed decisions regarding appropriate and cost effective services. However, there were several missed opportunities for John to have greater control over his rehabilitation process. Specifically, John's counselor initially made many decisions for him rather than with him.

Practicing a customer-driven approach to assuring quality services requires proactive practices. This means that counselors and other professionals who work with supported employment customers provide a **full and detailed presentation of all available options as well as information about the performance and outcomes of each option**. John's example focuses on the customer-counselor partnership. He acted as a self-advocate by taking the initiative to use a customer-driven approach in selecting a service provider. The counselor reacted positively to his initiative; however, many quality steps were omitted, because a customer-counselor partnership was not established initially.

The partnership begins when the customer enters the rehabilitation service system. John's counselor identified that he would need supported employment services and preselected a specific provider agency without informing him of the full array of community options. She should have begun the relationship by describing supported employment and the services that are available with this approach. Then, the counselor and John could identify which supports would be necessary to meet John's career goals. Next, the counselor should have identified the supported employment programs in the community who could provide those needed services and the track records of each organization. Finally, John could interview each service provider using his list of informal questions in order to select a provider.

The information in this chapter will address the importance of assessing quality and the purpose of quality indicators. In addition, a proactive process that can guide customer relationships will be presented to include:

- the customer--counselor relationship,
- the customer--service provider relationship,
- the customer--employment specialist relationship, and
- the customer--employer relationship.

All members involved in supported employment services must be committed to creating and maintaining an information base and cooperative partnership which supports a customer-driven approach to service delivery.

ASSESSING QUALITY

Traditionally, supported employment programs develop standards, objectives, and processes in an effort to build and promote quality supported employment services. Program managers and staff design standards and indicators to assist in gauging the success of their program services. The typical areas for assessment include: philosophy, mission, administration, fiscal management, image, community resources, personnel, job or career development, job training and support, long-term supports, and employee relations.

Most supported employment organizations recognize the need for assessing quality and are committed to providing excellent services. Yet, many supported employment personnel report that collecting and analyzing data on quality indicators is an unrealistic expectation. For this reason, some programs have stopped assessing the overall quality of their service organization. Typically, the primary reason for organizational assessment is to meet an agency need for supported employment provider certification. This certification is required to become a local vendor for supported employment and to qualify for state or local funding.

Collecting and analyzing data on supported employment service outcomes does not have to be difficult or time consuming. In fact, the quality of a supported employment program can be measured by addressing four simple features, as described in the following table.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FEATURES

1. Serving Persons with Significant Disabilities
2. Customer-Driven
3. Meaningful Employment
4. Maximizing Integration and Community Participation

Persons with Significant Disabilities

The 1992 reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 102-569) clearly describes the intended recipients of supported employment services. Supported employment was never intended to serve the typical vocational rehabilitation customer. Rather, this service option was created for those persons with significant disabilities who traditionally were not able to obtain competitive employment through vocational rehabilitation services. P.L. 102-569 further describes customers of supported employment as those individuals who have obtained intermittent employment but have not been successful in maintaining competitive employment and who need long term supports to achieve competitive employment success.

Supported employment service providers need to work with potential customers and rehabilitation counselors to ensure that the organization is marketing their services to the appropriate customers. Employment service organizations can analyze this quality indicator by determining who is accessing their services. What are the customers' primary and secondary disabilities, functional capabilities, and prior work histories? In addition, organizations should compare their supported employment customers with those customer's receiving general or transitional rehabilitation services. This will provide a clear indicator as to whether the program is serving individuals with the most severe disabilities. The following table presents a checklist of several different questions that supported employment service providers can ask when determining if their organizations are serving persons with the most severe disabilities.

PERSONS WITH THE MOST SEVERE DISABILITIES

1. What are customers' primary and secondary disabilities?
2. What are customers' functional capabilities?
3. What are customers' prior work or service histories?
4. What other characteristics make the customer more or less employable?
5. How do supported employment customers compare with those of other services?

Customer-Driven

A critical factor in assessing the overall quality of a supported employment program is analyzing outcome data to determine if services are truly customer-driven. Those organizations that are customer-driven shape their service delivery practices by the wants and needs of their customers. Therefore, the customers are in a position to control their rehabilitation outcomes.

Reading this manual will provide programs with different ideas on how to analyze this feature of supported employment. However, service providers can ask themselves a few basic questions to determine if their services are customer-driven. The following table presents these questions.

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN

1. Who selected the service provider?
3. Who selected the job coach?
4. Who selected the job?
5. Does the customer like the job?
6. Is the customer satisfied with the services?
7. Is the customer able and willing to retain the job?
8. Will the customer be assisted in finding new employment in the event of a job separation?

Meaningful Employment

The goal of supported employment was never to simply find jobs for persons with significant disabilities. Rather, the focus of quality supported employment dictates that services result in meaningful employment outcomes for the organization's customers.

Key to determining if customers are obtaining meaningful employment outcomes is determining if the jobs that customers are accepting are ***career-oriented***. Most people with disabilities are not interested in dead-end positions. As with other members of the labor force, people with disabilities are interested in jobs where they can build their resumes and/or employment positions where they can grow with a company.

Supported employment programs can analyze several different areas to determine if they are assisting their customers in obtaining meaningful employment. For instance, individuals with disabilities need a decent wage, company benefits, and a work schedule that matches with their community interests and supports. The following table presents several questions that supported employment organizations can ask themselves to determine if the services that they are providing related to this component are high quality.

MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

1. What are the customers' earnings?
2. What are the customers' work hours?
3. What are the customer's current fringe benefits and future fringe benefits?
4. Is the job career-oriented?

Maximizing Integration and Community Participation

Integration and community participation are important outcome measures of quality services. The idea that persons with severe disabilities can, and should, work in regular business environments is the guiding philosophy behind supported employment. Work is a highly valued activity in the American culture and offers wage earners numerous benefits. Having a job and paying taxes can enhance an individual's status in the community while offering the employee an opportunity to interact with co-workers and to develop a host of relationships at work and in the community.

There are multiple factors that can be examined when determining if a particular job or employee are integrated in the workplace and participating in the community. Analyzing a business site to determine if the company offers an opportunity for integration is important. In addition, the employee work area, work hours, and satisfaction level plays an important role in assessing a customer's integration and community participation. A negative answer to any of the following questions could be an indicator that intervention is necessary to improve the overall quality of the employment situation and consequently, the organization's services.

MAXIMIZING INTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1. Does the company offer opportunities for physical and social integration?
2. Does the employee's work area facilitate physical and social interactions?
3. To what extent is the customer integrated?
4. In what activities does the customer engage in the community?
5. Is the customer satisfied with work and community integration?

Evaluation Tools

Development of effective evaluation tools for determining quality supported employment services is an important area where much work remains. The evaluation tools that are used by supported employment provider agencies should present a clear picture on how to assess success and quality of services. Examples of different evaluation tools range from simple checklists to formal audits and program reviews. In addition, customer interviews and surveys are providing another important source of data in the program evaluation process.

There are a number of points that appear to be very important in the creation and implementation of a viable evaluation tool. The following list presents some points to remember when supported employment personnel begin to work on developing an instrument that is not bureaucratic, cumbersome, or an extravagant use of paper (Kregel, 1992).

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION TOOL

1. The instrument must be clear and easy to read.
2. The instrument must be easy to administer, score, and interpret.
3. The items must be directly related to objectives presented in this chapter and throughout this handbook.
4. The items on the survey must be able to discriminate between effective services and quality services.
5. The items must be sensitive to detect program improvement.

Impact of Program Quality

The quality of a program's services can mean success or failure for both the customer and provider. Organizations which are truly concerned about the quality of their services and want to continue growing, need to conduct follow-up marketing assessments measuring the satisfaction among customers. It is through these assessments that supported employment customers are invited into the process to identify the areas which are working, areas needing improvement, and/or areas that need to be created and made available to the customer-base.

Quality programs will want to identify the customer's aspirations and needs and to create the necessary services. This must be done on an on-going basis rather than developing service options solely based upon the professional judgements in isolation from the customer-base. As the private sector is beginning to notice and consider persons with disabilities as a significant marketing segment of our society, so must disability organizations, rehabilitation agencies, and supported employment service providers. Vital to the success of supported employment will be the ability of provider organizations to change from an elite centralized form of decision making to an information-sharing, mutually supportive, customer-driven approach to service delivery.

Customer Control

Supported employment customers can avoid having a process "done to them" by exercising their power and using it to select the type and conditions of services. These new customers of supported employment are becoming active participants in making decisions about their future. As the 1992 Rehabilitation Amendments outlined: individuals with severe disabilities are presumed capable of working and must be given the opportunity to make choices as they seek meaningful careers in integrated community settings.

As with any business seeking to expand its customer-base, supported employment must offer quality goods and services. If supported employment providers and rehabilitation agencies want to be successful, they need to continue their program reviews and evaluations of customer satisfaction. In addition, provider organizations must plan and implement programs and services which reflect excellence.

PURPOSE OF QUALITY INDICATORS

The 1992 Rehabilitation Act Amendments call for rehabilitation agencies to compile information about available services and service providers in the community. Supported employment and rehabilitation agencies must provide this information to their customers to assist them in making informed choices about potential providers of supported employment and other related services. Customers, rehabilitation counselors, and service providers, must work together to ensure that customers are directing their careers by choosing an organization, type of supports, and how those supports will be provided.

This information should be shared with supported employment customers as employment plans are being developed and decisions are being made. One way to accomplish this task would be for rehabilitation counselors to develop a chart with data contrasting all the local supported employment service providers. Using this information, a customer would be able to narrow down his or her provider options. The customer may also choose to interview supported employment agencies as John did when he was choosing between service providers. Additionally, the customer may want to ask for the service provider's marketing materials, such as a brochure written by customers regarding their satisfaction with the organization. The counselor and customer could analyze all the data and information in the program areas of importance (i.e., disability experience, career development experience, longevity of employment, etc.) and make a decision about which program has the supports and services desired and needed by the customer.

This type of information is not only valuable to customers as they make service delivery decisions, but it is equally important to rehabilitation counselors who are concerned about the cost, quality, and outcomes of services. With constant pressure for quality outcomes, counselors must know more about each supported employment provider. They should conduct evaluations of the supported employment agencies that their customers use and determine such things as:

- What range of services are offered?
- Does the organization conduct situational assessments?
- Are the employment specialists skilled in systematic instruction?
- Do they collect program data?

- Is data used to make decisions?
- Do customers receive twice monthly follow-up visits, as well as other long term supports?

PARTNERSHIPS & QUALITY

A customer-driven approach to supported employment practices and outcomes will require all key participants to rethink the quality indicators of supported employment. If people with significant disabilities cannot access employment, or if they have negative supported employment experiences such as underemployment, neglect of career interest, and/or isolation from their friends and co-workers, then the quality of the supported employment program will be extremely low.

There are many different techniques and resources for evaluating the quality of a supported employment organization. Some of the preferred sources include:

1. Interviews with supported employment customers.
2. Observation notes from meetings.
3. Written agreements with local businesses.
4. Staff development plans.
5. Staff interviews.
6. Minutes from organizational and board meetings.
7. Fact sheets and other promotional materials.
8. Employer contact sheets.
9. Letters from co-workers.
10. Annual reports.
11. Review of business files.
12. Copies of satisfaction survey results.

Yet, these sources will only provide part of the picture. As stated earlier, the provision of quality services will depend upon four key partnerships. Therefore, clearly defining the indicators of a successful partnership will provide a thorough picture of a high quality customer-driven approach to supported employment. The customer-counselor, customer-service provider, customer-employment specialist and the customer-employer partnerships are each highly interdependent upon the outcomes of the other partnerships. Each partnership plays an unique role in a customer-driven relationship in the supported employment process. The following are the quality indicators for customer-driven relationships with the rehabilitation counselor, the service provider, the employment specialist and the employer as they support the customer in five major areas: 1) Individual Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP), 2) Organizational Marketing, 3) Customer Profile, 4) Job Development, 5) Job Site Training, and 6) Long Term Supports.

INDICATORS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership for the IWRP

The Individual Written Rehabilitation Program known to most employment specialists and supported employment customers as the IWRP, is the beginning point for the development of strong partnerships. The process for making an excellent employment outcome will require incorporating customer-driven values and strategies into the IWRP or another similar plan (if rehabilitation services are not obtained through the State Vocational Rehabilitation [VR] Program). Even the best written plan can fail if it is not correctly put into place. Going through this process the rehabilitation counselor, supported employment service provider, and the employment specialist should assist the customer, as necessary, in carefully considering the opportunities and ramifications of available service options, supports, and career areas. Each partner will play an important role in the development and implementation of the IWRP.

Rehabilitation Counselor. The counselor should assist the customer in determining his or her employment goals. In addition, a strong counselor-customer relationship would include the counselor supporting the customer in analyzing information regarding supported employment service provider selection. The partnership requires the counselor to listen to the customer's wants and needs and to respect the customer's right to make changes in the IWRP. It will be important for the counselor to encourage independent thinking among all customers and to focus on the customers' abilities.

Supported Employment Service Provider. The supported employment service provider furnishes organizational information to VR and potential customers related to such organizational outcomes as business relationship, average wage of customers, and number of employment specialists. In addition, the service provider can present opportunities for the customer to tour and ask questions about the organization. A critical feature in this relationship will be the service provider agreeing to participate in vocational planning meetings with customers and rehabilitation counselors.

Employment Specialist. The employment specialist will need to meet with customers and rehabilitation counselors to review the IWRP. Additionally, the employment specialist should agree to participant in informational interviewing sessions that are directed by the customer. The customer and counselor will be interested in obtaining information related to the employment specialist's experiences with disability service issues, supported employment, and the business community.

Partnerships in Organizational Marketing

A good market-based plan will actually identify the scope and range of activities performed during job development or the job hunt process. Each partner in the employment process will have unique information and a specific area of expertise that the customer will need to access. Therefore, it is critical for all partners to play an active role during organizational marketing.

Rehabilitation Counselor. Prior to disseminating VR marketing materials to the local business community, the counselor will want the customer to review all materials and to approve their content. In addition, it will be important for the customer to participate in meetings to develop the VR marketing plan and to establish value statements. The counselor and customer will need to work together to improve business involvement in disability-related issues. Regular interaction between the counselor and customer will provide an opportunity for the customer and the VR counselor to evaluate marketing efforts.

Supported Employment Service Provider. Service providers must include their customers when conducting planning meetings for organizational marketing. The service provider will want to encourage customers to attend civic functions, business meetings, and parent groups to make community presentations with and without supported employment personnel. Customers who are active in organizational marketing efforts will be informed members of the organization's evaluation team as data is regularly analyzed and marketing plans are developed.

Employment Specialist. When conducting organizational marketing, the employment specialist will want to recruit customers to make presentations with them in the community. In addition, the employment specialist will want to request that satisfied customers talk about services to other potential customers. Customers can be a tremendous resource for identifying new customer markets and community business for the employment specialist and the organization.

Employers. Employers can begin to play a role in the customer-driven relationship during organizational marketing by agreeing to attend focus group meetings. In addition, employers and business employees can make community presentations. These presentations can cover such issues as ADA, business accommodations, and supported employment supports and services. Finally, employers can be an enormous resource for assisting in the development of organizational marketing materials.

Partnerships for Customer Profile

In most cases, it is possible to decide whether an individual should be referred for supported employment services based upon the information obtained during the referral and application process to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Yet, in many cases additional information may be needed to ensure choice and a customer-driven approach to service delivery. The following describes the individual roles for partners in the customer profile component of supported employment.

Rehabilitation Counselor. The customer must be given opportunities by the counselor to explore interests and strengths in a variety of work and community sites. The counselor can assist in this process by identifying potential situational assessment sites in the community, and providing information to the customer and service provider. It will be important for the counselor and customer to spend time together during this process in order to establish a relationship.

Service Provider. Service providers will want to work with the customer, VR, and the businesses community to identify nontraditional business work sites for situational assessment opportunities. In addition, service providers must adopt a philosophy that views the customer as the person directing the process as an accurate customer profile is developed. It will be important to ensure that data is recorded and shared with the customer, as well as the VR counselor.

Employment Specialist. The employment specialist must be committed to working with the customer and together identify possible employment opportunities in the business community. This will require the employment specialist and customer to spend time together customers when conducting planning meetings for organizational marketing. The service provider will want to encourage customers to attend civic functions, business meetings, and parent groups to make community presentations with and without supported employment personnel. Customers who are active in organizational marketing efforts will be informed members of the organization's evaluation team as data is regularly analyzed and marketing plans are developed.

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Service Provider. Service providers will want to work with the customer, VR, and the business community to identify nontraditional business work sites for situational assessment opportunities. In addition, service providers must adopt a philosophy that views the customer as the person directing the process so an accurate customer profile is developed. It will be important to ensure that data is recorded and shared with the customer as well as the VR counselor.

Employment Specialist. The employment specialist must be committed to working with the customer and together identify possible employment opportunities in the business community. This will require the employment specialist and customer to spend time together taking leadership positions on advisory committees for VR services and supported employment organizations. In addition, employers can make time for customers to visit employment sites in order to analyze work sites and occupations. Employers can be a valuable resource in exploring other community businesses needing workers.

Partnerships for Job Site Training and Support

The job site training component of supported employment is an active time for all partners in a customer driven relationship. It is during this phase of supported employment that the customer, employer, and employment specialist will have their greatest amount of contact. While the rehabilitation counselor is not directly involved, he or she needs to be aware of the training process to monitor and to facilitate successful employment outcomes.

Rehabilitation Counselor. The counselor can assist the customer by identifying potential supports and technology resources. In addition, the counselor, customer, and service provider should agree on a plan which includes: review of progress, up date on service information, collection and reporting of data, and joint visits with the customer and employer. The counselor must begin to assess the customer's satisfaction with the employment position, the employment specialist and the service provider.

Service Provider. The supported employment service provider should agree to track progress with customers and to regularly update the VR counselor. Service providers can encourage the involvement of customers in the development of job analyses, task analyses, job modifications, and instructional programs. In some cases it will be important for the service provider to work with VR, the customer, and community to assist in identifying possible technology resources. Service providers, customers, employers, and counselors will need to work together to explore community and workplace supports.

Employment Specialist. Together, the employment specialist and customer will identify necessary training and support needs for employment success. The employment specialist committed to a customer driven approach will assist the customer in developing relationships with co-workers from the first day of employment. In addition, the employment specialist and customer will agree on a fading schedule for employment specialist support. All partners will agree to review satisfaction of job training and work progress.

Employer. Many employers will agree to participate with the new employee and the employment specialist to explore the development of a co-worker or mentor relationship at the worksite. Employers, customers, and employment specialists will meet to review progress and satisfaction. The community employer will be a valuable resource with the identification of possible work site modifications and technology supports.

Partnerships for Long Term Supports

An overriding goal of the long term supports component of supported employment is ensuring that the customer's evolving interest and career advancement opportunities are being considered. When this becomes the goal, then all partners support steady employment rather than staying in any one job. The employment specialist will continue to make twice monthly visits to the customer. Together all partners assist in analyzing, identifying and implementing long term supports.

Rehabilitation Counselor. The counselor will work with the service provider and customer to prepare a long term support plan. This plan will include potential supports and possible funding options. Counselors and customers will need to meet to explore customer satisfaction with the job and the supported employment service. The rehabilitation counselor should share with the customer and service provider the availability of post-employment services, if required by the customer.

Service Provider. The service provider should assist customers with identifying long term support services and funding for each available option. The service provider can provide supports to the customer by assisting with complicated processes, such as funding supports that are available through the Social Security Administration.

Employment Specialist. The employment specialist and customer will want to regularly assess employment stability and satisfaction. Together, this partnership can explore potential career growth opportunities and options. The employment specialist, customer, and counselor will need to develop a plan for on-going supports which includes: type of supports, provider of supports, and funding for supports. The employment specialist and customer must agree on the support schedule and techniques for delivering support services.

Employer. The employer, customer, and employment specialist will need to meet to determine job satisfaction and long term supports. During such a meeting options for follow-up and supports through co-workers would be discussed.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to describe the challenge inherent in attempting to identify quality supported employment services. While the handbook has focused on how to develop and deliver a customer-driven employment service, Chapter 8 has described the specific features of a quality service organization. Specifically, these features include: 1) organizational services developed for persons with significant disabilities, 2) development of a customer-driven approach to services, 3) assisting customers in accessing meaningful employment outcomes, and 4) maximizing the integration and community participation for customers. However, it will be those supported employment service organizations that are able to address these four features while building successful partnerships that will have truly succeeded in achieving a high measure of quality supported employment services.

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